

H. P. Hall's observations; being more or less a history of political contests in Minnesota from 1849 to 1904

H. P. HALL'S OBSERVATIONS

BEING MORE OR LESS A HISTORY OF POLITICAL CONTESTS IN MINNESOTA

LC

FROM 1849 TO 1904.

AUTOGRAPH EDITION.

HP Hall

ST. PAUL, MINN.

1904.

F606 .H17

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS Two Copies Received SEP 24 1904 Copyright Entry July 25.
1904 CLASS a XXc. No. 92624 COPY B

COPYRIGHTED 1904 By H. P. HALL.

LC

H. P. Hall.

DEDICATION.

Library of Congress

To the young men who may at some period in their lives feel inclined to abandon regular and legitimate business for the purpose of securing a foothold in political life, and incidentally some office, these pages are warningly inscribed, with the simple suggestion

DON'T.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Page.

Territorial Governors—Ramsey, Gorman, Medary 7

The Dual Constitutional Convention 14

Final Admission—Three Governors at One Time 24

The Trick Which Saved the Capital for St. Paul 26

How Minneapolis Might Have Had the Capital 38

Peculiarities of Early Legislation 45

Election of the First State Governor 48

First Congressional Delegate from Minnesota was from Wisconsin 53

Ramsey's First Election to the Senate 56

Wilkinson's Defeat for Re-election to the Senate 61

Marshall's First Nomination for Governor 69

Windom's First Election to the Senate 72

Library of Congress

Donnelly's Defeat in the Great Campaign of 1868 76

William Windom's Start in Political Life 91

Donnelly's Resurrection as a Republican 93

Ramsey's Second Election to the Senate 101

The Liberal Republicans of 1872 108

How I Was Appointed Pension Agent but Slipped a Cog 113

How I Discovered C. K. Davis 121

Senator Ramsey Defeated for the Third Term 135

A. E. Rice's Bad Mistake 155

Pillsbury's First Election as Governor 158

Donnelly's Campaign for Congress as a Democrat 160

Putting on the Garb of Statehood 164

First Republican Senator —M. S. Wilkinson 168

King's Election to Congress and Pacific Mail Scandal 172

Davis' Second Election to the Senate by a Scratch 185

McGill's Nomination for Governor 190

Merriam's Election as Governor 196

Library of Congress

C. K. Davis' First Election to the Senate 202

Windom's Defeat by Sabin 206

Donnelly's Contest for Washburn's Seat in Congress 215

Merriam's Election as Speaker 221

Brass Kettle Campaign 225

Pillsbury's Defeat for the Fourth Term by Hubbard 231

Washburn's Defeat for Senate by Nelson 242

The Five Million Railroad Bonds 246

The Great State Treasury Defalcation 252

McMillan's Re-election in 1881 258

J. B. Gilfillan's Election to Congress 263

Washburn's Defeat of Sabin 279

Knute Nelson's Contest for Congress with Kindred 285

The Dunnell-Ward Fight in 1880 296

Series of Gubernatorial Campaigns 302

Moses E. Clapp's Election to the Senate 308

The Dunn-Collins Contest for Governor in 1904 317

Library of Congress

Resume of State Elections for Fifty Years 345

Windom's Candidacy for President 352

General Reflections and Nuggets of Wisdom 359

Our Trans-continental Railroads 364

Two Men Elected President Who Never Served 374

The Grant-Conkling-Garfield National Convention of 1880 378

5

HOW IT HAPPENED.

While, as far as they go, my observations are designed to make, when united, a political history, I do not assume to write what might be termed a complete résumé of the political events which have transpired in the State of Minnesota. That would involve the publication of a semi-political almanac, which is the farthest from my intention. It has been my aim to confine myself to political contests; not so much between political parties, but rather internecine struggles within the ranks of the party which has been dominant most of the time since the formation of the territory of the State of Minnesota. If the Democrats do not appear as frequently as the Republicans it is because the Republicans have been so much more numerous that they (the Democrats) did not have as much to fight about.

As the work has progressed, my greatest dilemma has been to determine what to omit rather than what to tell. I have sought not to invade the grave or unduly disturb the living, and so far as the dead are concerned have largely confined myself to matters made public while they were still alive, as well as quoting from public (though forgotten) records which live forever.

Library of Congress

I make no apology for the use of the personal pronoun. It probably appears more frequently than any other word in this book. For the most part I can say of what I have written, "all of which I saw and part of which I was," and I accordingly write of things as I saw and understood them at the time of their occurrence. I have aimed to refresh my memory, which is still fairly good and vivid, by reference to newspaper files, largely newspapers of my own, when I recorded events at the time they were current and fresh. Errors have doubtless crept in, but the truth has been stated as carefully as possible, fairly and honestly, without a single intention of misrepresentation. In writing my book no attempt has been made to indulge in stilted rhetoric—just plain newspaper vernacular.

I frankly state that all the truth has not been told, and it is better for history, for the living and the memory of the respected 6 dead, that there should be some omissions. I have no grudges to even up. Life is too short, and, with me, too near its conclusion, to set down aught in malice. And so, without apology, or further explanation, I submit my observations for approval or disapproval, as the reader may prefer.

I think I can claim without undue vanity that not many now live who possess as much personal knowledge of the matters referred to as I do, and I concluded it would be unjust to those who are so unwise as to wreck their lives in the maelstrom of politics to permit this information to perish with me. I accordingly launch my observations as my contribution to current history and my personal monument.

HP Hall

Alex Ramsey

7

OBSERVATION ONE.

The Territorial Governors—Ramsey, Gorman and Medary.

Library of Congress

The Territory of Minnesota was brought into being on March 3, 1849, the passage of an act in Congress organizing the territory. The boundaries were thus described in the organic act:

All that part of the territory of the United States which lies within the following limits, to wit: Beginning in the Mississippi river, at the point where the line of forty-three degrees and thirty minutes of north latitude crosses the same; thence running due west on said line, which is the northern boundary of the State of Iowa, to the northwest corner of the said State of Iowa; thence southerly along the western boundary of said state to the point where said boundary strikes the Missouri river; thence up the middle of the main channel of the Missouri river to the mouth of White Earth river; thence up the middle of the main channel of the White Earth river to the boundary line between the possessions of the United States and Great Britain; thence east and south of east along the boundary line between the possessions of the United States and Great Britain to Lake Superior; thence in a straight line to the northernmost point of the State of Wisconsin in Lake Superior; thence along the western boundary line of said State of Wisconsin to the Mississippi river; thence down the main channel of said river to the place of beginning, be and the same is hereby, erected into a temporary government by the name of the Territory of Minnesota.

There had been a controversy between the Senate and the House, the Senate being Whig and the House Democratic, as to organizing any new territories. The slavery question was then dominant, and the Southern Whigs and Democrats, as well, were opposed to admitting any more free territory. The Northern Whigs were divided. The result was that all through that session of Congress the question was of organizing the territory or not. The Senate passed the bill early, but the House, in the controversy between the Democrats and the Whigs, held it up; so that it was not until the last day of the session, and practically the last day of President Polk's administration, that the bill was finally passed.

Library of Congress

President Polk was a Democrat, and his successor-to-be, General Taylor, was a Whig. Polk was strongly urged to organize the territory by appointing the new governor, but, with a fairness which almost seems abnormal in the present state of politics, he declined to take advantage of the last day of his administration to put a Democrat in office. It is almost impossible to imagine a president of the present day declining to secure a political advantage as a matter of sentiment. But the country had evidently not reached the stage of political "civilization" which exists to-day. The consequence was that it fell to General Taylor, the Whig president, to organize the territory of Minnesota; and in doing that he selected Alexander Ramsey of Pennsylvania as the first governor. His commission bore date April 2, 1849, though his term of office in Minnesota did not actually begin until June 1, 1849, and continued to May 15, 1853.

It was early on the morning of May 27, 1849, that the steamer "Dr. Franklin" stuck her nose into the bank of the river about where the foot of Jackson street in St. Paul is now located. This steamer carried Alexander Ramsey and his family. His family then consisted of his wife, a son of three years, and a nurse. The governor was an early riser. Leaving his family sleeping on the boat, he concluded to reconnoiter the town. Leaving the boat and clambering up the steep hill, the first building he encountered was the Merchants Hotel, located where it still stands at the corner of Third and Jackson streets, and then kept by the late J. W. Bass. It was a combination of log and frame structure, and, while the hour was early, Mr. Bass was on hand, all attention to his visitor, though unaware of his identity. He explained to the visitor that the governor had just been appointed, and he expected the hotel business would soon be booming, as people would be coming to the capital, and he was accordingly making improvements, which he insisted on showing. Governor Ramsey says he found the improvements to consist of cutting up the rooms, already small, 9 into still smaller ones, evidently with the view of furnishing accommodations for a larger number of guests by reducing the space each one would occupy. Concluding that the accommodations would not be satisfactory to himself and family, Governor Ramsey strolled up Third street, and before he had gone half a block saw a building which bore

Library of Congress

evidence of reconstruction; and asking a boy, who chanced to come along, what that building was, the boy replied, "The governor's residence." He returned to the boat with rather an unfavorable impression of the situation. The governor consulted with the clerk, who advised him to remain on the boat and take his breakfast and go up to Mendota, where they had to deliver a cargo of Indian supplies.

Gen. H. H. Sibley, then the delegate to Congress from Minnesota, resided at Mendota; and while the governor had no personal acquaintance with him, he concluded to accept his advice and return to St. Paul later in the day to locate. Arriving at Mendota, General Sibley came on board without knowing the governor was there, but upon meeting the new official greeted him with his characteristic hospitality and insisted on the whole family coming to his residence until accommodations could be secured in St. Paul. With some demurrer on the part of Mrs. Ramsey, who thought it would be trespassing on hospitality, the invitation was accepted, the governor assuring her that there was nothing else to be done, as he had unsuccessfully explored the capital earlier in the day.

Later in the day Ramsey and Sibley started on horseback for St. Paul, Sibley suggesting a call on the commandant of Fort Snelling en route. When the commandant was introduced and found he had a real, live governor on his hands, he told Governor Ramsey that, under the regulations of the War Department, when a governor visited a military post, he was entitled to a salute of seventeen guns, and proceeded to give orders for their firing. Governor Ramsey told the commandant that he was not very familiar with military customs, but if he would supply him with a glass of good whiskey he would waive the guns.

When Ramsey told me this story he said, with a twinkle of his eye,

I think that must have been pretty good whiskey, for we went down to St. Paul that day and laid the foundations for a good state.

Library of Congress

Crossing the Mississippi on a wheezy and primitive rope ferry, the shore opposite Fort Snelling was reached, where a hill almost as precipitous as the side of a house was encountered. The ride to St. Paul was not cheerful, there being no road and scarcely a trail. They encountered withal sloughs where their horses floundered up to their saddle-girths in mud and water; but the journey was finally made, and the small house, formerly a saloon, which the little boy had styled "the governor's residence," was actually selected as such as a dernier resort, there being nothing else vacant in the town.

It was three or four weeks before the "executive mansion" was sufficiently transformed for occupancy, and during that time the governor and his family remained at General Sibley's. The governor had in the meantime sent orders by the boats to St. Louis for furniture, and when he brought his family down they came in dug-out canoes, one canoe containing the family and another their trunks. This was the customary way of coming from Mendota to St. Paul in those days (there being no traveled road), except when the large boats chanced to be making a trip, though it was not a very safe method for inexperienced people.

The governor and his family landed at what was known in St. Paul as the Upper Levee at the foot of Chestnut street. The next serious trouble was the transportation of their effects from the landing to the "executive mansion;" such a thing as a truck or an express wagon was unknown, but at last a Frenchman with an ox cart was discovered. The trunks were loaded thereon, and with Mrs. Ramsey sitting upon one of the trunks, while the governor walked, the cavalcade proceeded up Eagle street and down Third street, from what is now the Seven Corners. The whole town turned out to witness the official arrival; and it is within bounds to state that the governor of Minnesota, traveling on foot, with his family seated on trunks in an ox cart, landing at their "official residence" on Third street, between Robert and Jackson, is an instance of democratic simplicity which eclipses Jefferson's inauguration ride.

Library of Congress

This was not a very encouraging advent for the new governor, but Ramsey was young and plucky in those days, and had undertaken the task of making a state even greater than he then dreamed of, and he had not put his hand to the plow to look backward. What he accomplished during his lifetime, and the development which he saw, was in marked contrast with the early period of his arrival, and was most exceedingly gratifying to him, as he frequently recounted to his old friends his beginning in Minnesota.

At that time the governor was ex-officio Commissioner of Indian Affairs; and as there were more Indians in the territory than white people, a large portion of his official duties related to regulating the Indians; and in "regulating the Indians" I should explain that the term means crowding them off the earth so that the aggressive white man can take his place. Of course, Governor Ramsey was only conforming to the customs of the country and discharging his plain duty. But he proved a great success, and was soon a great chieftain in the minds of the Indians. The most important treaties with the Indians, whereby they ceded their reservations and moved farther west, were made during Governor Ramsey's administration.

During his six years' term as territorial governor there was nothing of greater importance than these Indian treaties.

While President Polk had been very punctilious about seizing the control of Minnesota for his party, when President Pierce was elected by the Democrats, in 1852, he had no compunctions whatever in selecting a Democrat to succeed the Whig governor of Minnesota. General Willis A. Gorman, of Indiana, who had distinguished himself in the Mexican war, as well as served a term in Congress, was promptly appointed governor of Minnesota by President Pierce, in 1853, and Governor Ramsey was for the time relegated to private life; though he had made such a marked and so successful an administration in the new territory that he was later called to the governorship and other high positions, and

Library of Congress

was perhaps more potential than any one man who ever lived in laying the foundation for what is now the greatest state in the Union.

GOVERNOR GORMAN.

It was in May, 1853, that Governor Gorman took charge of affairs in Minnesota. The territory was then crystallizing into formal shape preparatory to statehood and questions were arising 12 which had not come up under Governor Ramsey's administration.

The germ of our railroad system was really laid during Governor Gorman's administration, though the system has since developed to such an extent that the plans of the early settlers would hardly be recognized, even as a rough survey of what is now in existence. Still the territorial legislature was passing land grants, and Governor Gorman was especially insistent on inserting the clause imposing a three per cent gross earnings tax in lieu of all other taxation upon the railroads then in embryo; it is not at all likely that he or anyone else then living in their wildest imagination dreamed of the vast sums which would accrue from this form of taxation.

Governor Gorman had an especially stormy time during his career with the Indian traders. He, too, was Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and the territory had become the mecca for Indian traders; in fact, in the sparsely settled condition of the territory Indian trade was the vital and essential business. On general principles it is probably fair to assume that Governor Gorman was justified in antagonizing the Indian traders, at all events he did so very vigorously; with the result that he retired from office in 1857, and President Buchanan (also a Democrat) appointed Samuel Medary, an editor of Columbus, Ohio, his successor.

GOVERNOR MEDARY.

Medary had been, like nearly everyone else in Ohio, an active politician; had presided at the convention which nominated Buchanan in Cincinnati in 1856, and was credited with

Library of Congress

being the author of the political shibboleth “Fifty-four forty or fight,” which rang through the country during the period when the Oregon boundary was in dispute with England.

The territory was then approaching statehood. Governor Gorman's last message to the territorial legislature was largely devoted to showing that the territory had reached proportions in population, business, and in every other respect which would entitle it to admission as a state.

Medary's term of office was, accordingly, quite brief; for in less than a year after he came to Minnesota the territory was admitted as a state, and the reign of the territorial governors ceased. They had left their impress, however, especially the work of Ramsey and Gorman—an impress which was lasting and will undoubtedly remain as long as Minnesota exists.

As a matter of fact, Congress had passed an act, on Feb. 26, 1857, authorizing a state government for Minnesota. This was prior to Medary's coming to the territory as governor. It authorized an election in June, 1857, to select delegates to meet and form a state constitution, which was to be in conformity to the federal constitution and to be submitted to the voters of the territory. Governor Gorman had already issued the official call for the election when Governor Medary arrived, and the anomaly was presented of one governor calling an election and another one seeing that the duties thus indicated were properly discharged.

14

OBSERVATION TWO.

The Dual Convention Which Framed the Constitution of Minnesota—A Violent Political Contest.

Governor Medary reached St. Paul April 22, 1857. A special session of the legislature had been called by Governor Gorman to arrange for a constitutional convention, and on April

Library of Congress

29th Governor Medary sent his first message to the legislature. The two important items to which it referred were the constitutional convention and the railroad land grant which had just been passed for the benefit of the territory and state by Congress. The session was a brief one, adjourning on May 25th, but it arranged the machinery for the constitutional convention and appropriated \$30,000 for its expenses.

An active political campaign was already in progress for the election of delegates to the constitutional convention on June 1st. The Republicans were especially active, importing a number of prominent speakers.

No sooner was the election over than both sides began claiming to have a majority. The convention was due to consist of 102 members, and the Republican newspapers claimed 59 Republican to 43 Democratic delegates. The Democrats were less specific and vociferous in their claims, and practically conceded that they were in a minority without openly confessing the fact. The Republicans were exceedingly suspicious that they would be tricked out of their majority, as there were several contests, notably the election of four delegates from St. Anthony in Hennepin county—now Minneapolis East. The Democratic claim was that B. B. Meeker was chosen by 524 votes, C. L. Chase by 521, C. A. Tuttle by 509, and William M. Laschalles by 497. The Republican contestants were J. H. Murphy, whom the Democrats claimed received but 496 votes, I. W. Putnam 491, D. 15 M. Hale 495, D. A. Secombe 472. Presumably, on the ground of alleged fraudulent voting, C. G. Ames, register of deeds in Hennepin county, refused to issue certificates to the four Democrats, and Governor Medary, with due political strenuousness, promptly removed him from office. The county commissioners, not to be outdone in politeness, as promptly re-elected him, and he then gave the certificates to the Republicans.

There was also a contest in Houston county and some others, which made it doubtful which party would have the supremacy if there was a fair fight. But such a thing as a fair fight was not imaginable in those days; possibly I might say the situation has not much

Library of Congress

improved in politics in this respect since that early period. It was therefore a question of the sharpest faction, instead of the rightful faction, which was due to win.

The convention was due to be called to order at 12 o'clock noon, Monday, July 13, 1857. The Republican party was only a year or two old, and its members evidently believed in being very prompt on such an occasion as the capturing of a state. They accordingly went to the capitol on Sunday and took possession of the house of representatives and remained there all night in order to make sure that they were present on time, Monday noon. At 15 minutes before 12 o'clock on Monday, according to the official Republican record, J. W. North called the convention to order and nominated Thomas J. Galbraith as president pro tem. Mr. North also put the question and declared it carried. The Democrats, not to be outdone in enterprise, appeared in the hall just as these proceedings began, headed by C. J. Chase, the secretary of the territory, who called the convention to order. As soon as he did so, ex-Gov. Willis A. Gorman moved that the convention adjourn, and all the Democrats filed out, leaving the Republicans in peaceful possession of the hall.

The official record of the proceedings of the Republican convention states that after Mr. North put the question for the election of a temporary chairman, "Mr. Galbraith thereupon took the chair," and then, in brackets, this is added: "At this stage of the proceedings a portion of the delegates left the convention." That is the only allusion the Republican record makes to Governor Gorman's motion to adjourn.

16

Both sides caucused during the evening to devise plans each for getting the better of the other; but the caucuses bore no fruit. The next day the Republicans again took early possession of the hall. The Democrats formed in a body, with Secretary Chase at their head, and marched to the door of the hall where the Republicans were in session, but did not enter. Secretary Chase said to his Democratic brethren in explanation:

Library of Congress

The hall to which the delegates adjourned yesterday is now occupied by a meeting of the citizens of the territory, who refuse to give possession to the constitutional convention.

In emulation of the King of France who marched up the hill and then marched down again, the Democrats turned and sought the council chamber, which is now called the senate. The building was incomplete, and the council chamber was not sufficiently finished for occupancy. Secretary Chase, however, called them to order, and Hon. H. H. Sibley was chosen president of the Democratic constitutional convention. The convention then adjourned, and though they met briefly every day, it was not until June 22d that the room was sufficiently completed for regular sessions.

Meantime the Republicans, claiming to be the only legitimate constitutional convention, proceeded to business in the house of representatives. They reported 56 present, which was a majority of the 102, the number of the entire body.

The Republicans organized by electing St. A. D. Balcombe of Winona permanent president, and L. A. Babcock secretary. Though it was summer time and no fire was necessary, it was important to recognize the German element of the party, and Gustave Leue was accordingly elected fireman. Perhaps it was due to this early recognition of the Germans which led Mr. Leue to become a Democrat later in life and start the first German paper ever issued in Minnesota.

The early proceedings of both constitutional conventions were chiefly devoted to determining which one was the regular, "blown-in-the-bottle" affair. The claim of the Republicans was that 56 delegates had signed a paper requesting Mr. North to call the convention to order, and that, as the convention must itself originate its organization, the majority had a right to devise the plan. They of course ignored the question of the contestants already mentioned, and the four delegates from St. Anthony were among the 56 signing the call. To have admitted any question about the legitimacy of the election of any of the 56 members would have ruined their claim, and consequently the contests

were deliberately ignored. There have been hosts of precedents since that time to sustain this early action of the Minnesota Republicans, but in those days no precedents were necessary, and they simply proceeded to be a law unto themselves.

CLAIM OF THE DEMOCRATS.

The contention of the Democrats was twofold: first, that the Republicans did not have a majority uncontested; second, that the constitutional convention, being ordered by an act of Congress, the secretary of the territory, Mr. Chase, who was an appointee of the general government, was the proper person to call the convention to order. The original report of the committee on credentials in the Republican wing showed 56, though later 3 contestants were added, making 59. In the Democratic convention there were 53 participants, though the committee on credentials only reported 49 uncontested seats.

On the 22nd of July Delegate Charles E. Flandrau offered a resolution setting forth that the Democrats had over 1,600 majority in the territory; that the action of Register of Deeds Ames in issuing certificates to the four Republican delegates was illegal, and that the body at the other end of the capitol was a band of usurpers and revolutionists. The resolutions provided that they should be transmitted to the president and all the members of the cabinet. These resolutions were debated during a portion of each day for five days, and were finally adopted on the 27th of July. Having thus by their own declaration proved themselves to be entirely legitimate, the Democrats proceeded to elect permanent officers, choosing Gen. H. H. Sibley for president, and Major J. J. Noah for secretary. Rev. J. G. Riheldaffer was elected chaplain, but, evidently thinking that wing of the convention could not be saved by prayer, he declined, and Rev. John Penman was chosen and duly served.

2

18

OVERTURE FOR PEACE.

Library of Congress

The first overture for peace was a resolution offered by Judge Sherburne in the Democratic convention, providing for a committee of five to confer with the Republicans. This was debated at length and indefinitely postponed by a vote of 23 to 19. On August 10th the Republican convention adopted a similar resolution and sent it to the Democratic body.

The Democrats were willing to confer with the Republicans if they could do so without recognizing them as a constitutional convention. Consequently they proposed a caucus committee and appointed a committee of five for this mission. The Republicans declined to meet a caucus committee; and when their resolutions asking a conference reached the Democratic convention they were referred to the caucus committee, which promptly reported that, in view of the Republican refusal to meet a caucus committee, instead of a convention committee, the convention could not recognize the Republicans. This action was adopted, and an official record made in the proceedings in accordance with the facts. There was really no principle at all at stake in all this controversy, and looked at from the present standpoint it seems decidedly childish. The actors themselves evidently took that view later. They were all anxious for the admission of the territory as a state, and if they went to Congress with two constitutions it would simply mean delay and disadvantage to everyone. There was no contest, as in Kansas, over slavery, or, in fact, anything else. It was merely an effort to establish a legal charter for the state, and, as passion cooled, common sense resumed sway.

On the 18th of August the Republicans again made a move for a conference, and appointed Messrs. T. J. Galbraith, Lewis McCune, Cyrus Aldrich, L. K. Stannard and Thomas Wilson as a committee. The same day that was done A. E. Ames offered a resolution in the Democratic body for a conference committee, and it was ordered by vote of 33 to 20. The Democratic committee was composed of W. A. Gorman, J. R. Brown, William Holcomb, M. Sherburne and W. W. Kingsbury. It took but a very few days to ascertain that, laying politics aside, there was practically no difference of

Library of Congress

opinion upon the constitution. 19 On August 27th the conference committee of each convention reported the same document, and on the 28th both conventions adopted the constitution. It only remained for the joint committee on enrollment to report that the constitution mutually agreed upon had been correctly enrolled to complete the work. This committee was composed of Moses Sherburne (Democrat), chairman; L. K. Stannard (Republican), secretary; Joseph R. Brown, W. Holcomb, W. W. Kingsbury, on the part of the Democrats, and Thomas J. Galbraith, Cyrus Aldrich and Charles McClure on the part of the Republicans. This report was made on August 29th, and the double-headed convention adjourned on that day, having occupied 47 days, during 41 of which sessions were held. The constitution was ratified by a vote of the people on Oct. 13, 1857, but it was not until May 11, 1858, that Minnesota formally became a member of the Union by act of Congress.

INCIDENTS OF THE CONTEST.

While this epitomizes the absolute official proceedings of both conventions, there were numerous incidents of interest in connection with this early contest that are worthy of preservation.

There were three daily papers in St. Paul at that time, the Pioneer and Democrat, published by Goodrich & Sommers, the Minnesotian, published by J. W. Owens and George W. Moore, and the Times, published by T. M. Newson; the two latter were Republican, and of course sustained the Republican convention and belabored the Democratic. At the beginning the Pioneer and Democrat was sufficiently enterprising to report both bodies. The newspapers in those days did not indulge in display headings, and over a two or three-column report a single line, boldfaced head would appear "The Constitutional Convention," following with the Democratic proceedings; then came the Republican proceedings, and that was headed "A Republican Meeting." The Republican papers never attempted to report any proceedings save the Republican, but would occasionally give excerpts of occurrences in the Democratic body. The Minnesotian

Library of Congress

headed such reports "Border Ruffian Convention." 20 Almost every day the Minnesotian had an editorial fusillade against the Democrats. After a few days the Pioneer and Democrat dropped its report of the "Republican meeting," and thereafter to be informed concerning what was going on at the capitol it was necessary to read the papers of both political persuasions.

Both parties held frequent caucuses, in fact almost every evening, and excitement ran high. An open outbreak between the respective bodies was anticipated, and many members of both bodies went armed, to be prepared for any emergency.

ACTUAL HOSTILITIES.

In spite of the suppressed excitement and constantly expected outbreak, but one hostile scene really occurred. On the 18th of August the Republican convention appointed a conference committee, and on the same day the Democratic convention appointed a similar committee. Thomas Wilson was a member of the Republican committee and ex-Governor Gorman a member of the Democratic.

If the subsequent events had not absolutely formed a portion of the official proceedings, being duly printed and preserved in the printed record of the conventions, I should not here allude to them, and in doing so now I quote from the records rather than give any version of my own.

An affray had occurred between ex-Governor Gorman and Mr. Wilson on the 25th of August. This occurred during a meeting of the joint conference committee, the appointment of which I have already noted. The Pioneer and Democrat at that time made this report of the event:

Mr. Gorman was reclining on the sofa, and Mr. Wilson sitting facing him, when Mr. Wilson replied to Judge Sherburne that there were some men whom he hoped would understand him, in whom he had no confidence personally or politically, and he wanted to choose his

Library of Congress

own associates. "But," said Mr. Wilson, "I do not apply that language to Judge Sherburne." Mr. Kingsbury then promptly asked Mr. Wilson if he intended that language for him, to which Wilson replied, "No, sir; but there were others on the committee whom he did apply it to." Whereupon Mr. Gorman raised on his elbow from a reclining position on the sofa and asked quietly if Mr. Wilson intended the offensive language for him, to which Mr. Wilson replied, looking in the face of Mr. Gorman, 21 "I certainly do apply it to you." Whereupon Mr. Gorman raised and struck Mr. Wilson with the small end of his gold-headed cane which he then held in his hand and broke it, and then followed with blows of his fist. They were promptly separated, and while two persons were holding Mr. Gorman, Mr. Wilson seized a large lead-headed cane and approached Mr. Gorman, and Gorman said, "Don't hold me until he strikes me with that cane. If he does I shall make a more summary defense than I have."

Mr. Gorman shortly after passed out of the room and returned in a minute or two and took up his hat and walked deliberately away.

On the 26th of August Governor Gorman rose in the Democratic convention to a question of personal privilege. He read the account of the altercation, and in tracing down the offensive remark to himself it reminds one of the story of the little girl playing with her kitten in a room where she and her grandmother were the only occupants. When her grandmother had reproved her for some transgression the little girl stroked the kitten and said, "There is some one in this room that I wish was dead, and it isn't you, Kitty, and it isn't me."

Governor Gorman read the report from the Pioneer Democrat, which I have quoted above, as his explanation of the event, and, as it appears in the official record of the constitutional convention, it seems fair to present it here, though he has long since passed from life's activities.

Library of Congress

In the Republican convention the next day, August 27th, Judge Wilson rose and made a lengthy personal explanation. This, too, is spread upon the pages of the volume reporting the Republican convention, and that both sides may be properly represented I again quote from the official record. Judge Wilson began by stating that he responded to a question by Judge Sherburne.

“There are some gentlemen that I wish would always understand me. I prefer to choose my own companions.” Those, I think are the very words I used. As to Judge Sherburne feeling insulted and demanding an explanation that is a flat lie, got up by those who retail it, whoever they may be—an unmitigated lie. Judge Sherburne, I am confident, will state that fact if called upon. To him I appeal in confidence. * * * I made the remark I above stated, and Governor Gorman rose up and asked me if I meant him by that remark. I told him certainly. 22 I spoke it out flatly, with no reservation. I was sitting by a round table in the corner of the room. I had been sitting a few minutes with my feet upon the table, and whether I was in that position at the moment, I do not certainly know. Those present say I was and my recollection is that I was. He took his cane—every man knows it was a heavy cane—and struck me over the head before I could place myself in a position to defend myself. I was then in a position in which I could not defend myself in any possible way. I was struck to the floor, and as I rose I saw this man—the most consummate and the basest coward I ever saw in my life—diagonally across the room. I picked up a fragment of the cane and finding it of no use for my purpose I seized my own, when I saw him shrinking away into the corner of the room and crying, “Don't let him strike me with that cane.” He immediately left the room. Where he went I do not know. My friends could not ascertain, and as I understand he continued in some place around the capitol until nearly dark, and then with two men in his buggy to guard him went home.

Referring to Mr. Gorman's statement of the attempt of Wilson to strike him with a lead-headed cane, Mr. Wilson spoke in addition, and it is thus recorded in the official report:

Library of Congress

Now as to that, we were standing opposite to each other across the room. There were a number of men close around me to prevent me from crossing the room to him, and he on the other side of the room evidently much alarmed for his safety, no person holding him or having a hand upon him. For all that matter all that was necessary was to hold him from jumping out of the window.

On the same day a resolution was offered in the Republican convention, declaring that they would no longer confer with the Democratic convention until Gorman was removed from the committee. This resolution, however, was not pressed and did not pass. The work of the conference committee was nearly completed, and, notwithstanding the bitter feeling which existed, it was apparently smothered for the time being for the public good.

One of the incidents of the affair was a subscription for one dollar each, which Michael E. Ames took up among the Democrats. He went to them, saying, "Governor Gorman has broken his cane and we want to buy him a new one." The response was prompt, and another gold-headed cane was soon secured, which bore this inscription:

Presented to Willis A. Gorman by the Democratic members of the constitutional convention for valuable services rendered the party.

23

The closing business in each convention was in keeping with the proceedings throughout. The Democrats controlled the territorial government, George Armstrong of St. Paul being treasurer.

While by the act of the territorial legislature \$30,000 had been appropriated and a per diem of \$3 per day fixed as the pay of the delegates, the treasurer refused to pay anything to the Republicans, but paid the Democrats regularly. A few minutes before the Democratic convention adjourned, A. E. Ames offered a resolution naming 53 Republicans as entitled

Library of Congress

to compensation, coupled with the request to the treasurer that he pay them their per diem. W. P. Murray of St. Paul moved that it be laid on the table, and the motion prevailed.

The next motion was for adjournment sine die.

While this was going on in the Democratic convention, Mr. Thomas Foster in the Republican convention offered a resolution, the preamble of which arraigned the Democrats for bad faith in refusing to pay the Republicans after the compromise constitution had been agreed upon, stating that part of the compact was to allow them salaries. His preamble concluded with this resolution:

Resolved , That the violation of honor and faith on the part of the Democratic minority convention implied by this action on their part and the territorial treasurer should receive, and we doubt not will receive, the condemnation of all honest men; and we appeal to the people of Minnesota to rectify the wrong of this action of a partisan territorial officer, the appointee of the present governor, acting under the influence of a partisan convention.

On motion of Amos Coggsell, the resolution was indefinitely postponed, and the next motion in the Republican convention was for the final adjournment. The Republican delegates were subsequently paid, though no record appears showing just how that conclusion was reached. The original appropriation of the territorial legislature for the expenses of the constitutional convention was \$30,000, but State Auditor Dunbar sent a report to the legislature in 1860 stating that the total cost was \$59,803.07. The original amount was considerably increased by the necessity of issuing the debates in two volumes owing to the partisan quarrel.

Probably in the hope that their pay would be forthcoming in the future, the Republican convention closed with prayer.

24

OBSERVATION THREE.

The Final Admission of the State—Three Governors at the Same Time.

As the continuation of Minnesota as a territory was a large bill of expense to the general government, our people supposed that it was only necessary to conform with the legal requirements to at once become a state. As the constitution was to be adopted in October, and the legislature and state officers were elected at the same time, the document provided that the first state legislature should meet in December, 1859. The Democrats carried the state, electing Gen. H. H. Sibley governor, and George L. Becker, J. M. Cavanaugh and W. W. Phelps members of Congress. It was uncertain just how many members would be allowed the state, but in order to keep on the safe side it was decided to elect three. Congress finally allowed but two, and the three members elected cast lots, the result being that Mr. Becker lost, and Cavanaugh and Phelps served as the first members of Congress from the State of Minnesota.

When the time came for the meeting of the State Legislature Minnesota was still a territory. The House of Representatives was Democratic, having been elected at the same time as Buchanan, in 1856, but there was a wide diversity of opinion growing up between the northern and southern Democrats. The southern Democrats were not anxious to admit any more free-state congressmen, and, as the admission of Minnesota would give the Democrats two more votes, the Republicans were nothing loth to have delay. Here was a dilemma. Locally the state government was provided for, but nationally not recognized. Governor Medary was still the executive, but he was a territorial governor, while Sibley was the state governor-elect. Minnesota, however, was adequate to the emergency. Her State Legislature went right along passing laws, and they were duly signed 25 by C. L. Chase, secretary of the territory, as acting governor. He certified them as secretary besides. Practically Minnesota had three governors at the same time. Sibley was governor-elect; Chase signed the bills passed by the legislature as acting governor, and Medary drew his salary as territorial governor until May 24, 1858.

Library of Congress

On a close legal construction it is questionable whether any of these laws were strictly legal. By good fortune the late Charles E. Flandrau had been appointed, in July, 1857, a territorial judge, and he was also elected in October, 1857, as one of the associate justices of the Supreme Court. Consequently he had a pretty good title to his position whether Minnesota was a territory or a state. The question of the legality of the laws passed under such peculiar circumstances would naturally reach the courts, and Judge Flandrau was the first judge called upon to pass upon the question. He, of course, promptly decided that they were all right, and no successful attack was ever made, later, to question their legality. In a historical address delivered some years before his death, Judge Flandrau thus spoke of that incident in his judicial career:

With that common sense which should always govern a frontier judge, I held it was all right and perfectly constitutional. What else could one do? They had passed an immense bookful of laws, and the job of declaring them all unconstitutional at once was rather too formidable an undertaking for a boy. So I did the only common sense thing there was to do. But I felt a good deal as the jury did when it acquitted the man of murder, but said he must be careful not to do it again.

It was on the 11th day of May, 1858, that Congress passed the act admitting Minnesota into the Union, and as soon as the slow process of official information could reach the state, which was May 24th, Medary retired, and General Sibley took his seat as governor. After enacting laws up to March 25th the legislature took a recess until June 2nd, in order to be ready for more business as soon as the admission had taken place. Upon re-assembling a session of three months was held, this time the acts being signed by the actual governor of the state.

And thus through tribulation and bitter political strife Minnesota framed her organic law and became one of the stars in the Union.

OBSERVATION FOUR.

The Attempt to Remove the Capital of the State to St. Peter, and How It Was Defeated by Stealing the Bill.

One of the most interesting legislative episodes which ever took place in the history of Minnesota occurred during the session of the territorial legislature in the fall of 1857. The territory was in a transition state, anxiously awaiting the time when it could don the garb of statehood. The organic act of Minnesota, passed by Congress in March, 1849, contained this proviso concerning the location of the capital:

The legislative assembly of the Territory of Minnesota shall hold its first session in St. Paul, and at its first session the governor and legislative assembly shall locate and establish a temporary seat of government for said territory at such place as they may deem eligible, and shall at such time as they shall see proper prescribe by law the manner of promoting the permanent seat of government of said territory by vote of the people.

About this time a real estate pool was made up to permanently remove the capital from St. Paul, based upon the claim that under the clause quoted it could be done by legislation, without submitting it to a vote of the people. With this end in view the St. Peter Land Company, which had been formed for the purpose of booming a townsite at that point, entered the lists to secure the capital. A shrewd combination was made in the legislature, and Gov. Willis A. Gorman, then the executive of the territory, was one of the leading stockholders in the company. From the beginning of the session the matter was current talk, and on the 5th of February Mr. Thomas, a member of the house, gave notice of a bill for the removal. On the 6th 27 of February W. D. Lowry of Rochester introduced a bill in the council (the branch which we now term the senate) for the removal, and Mr. Thomas' bill was never heard of thereafter.

Library of Congress

Notwithstanding the talk which had been made, the people of St. Paul had not believed it would materialize, and indignation and excitement was great when the bill appeared. A combination had been made sufficiently strong to put the measure through both branches of the legislature, while the St. Paul people had been sleeping in the fancied security of possession. For decency's sake a little time was taken, and it was not until February 9th, three days after the introduction, that the bill was considered in committee of the whole and ordered to its third reading by a vote of 7 to 6. Three days later the council passed the bill by a vote of 8 to 7. This was the exact strength of the respective parties. The house acted with greater promptness, the bill being read the first and second times on the 16th, and on the 17th it came up for its third reading. Its opponents sought to prevent a vote by filibustering tactics, but the postponement was very brief, the bill passing the house on the 18th by a vote of 20 to 17. There was quite a little controversy over the title to the bill, and William Branch of St. Paul moved to make the title read, "A Bill for the Sale of Town Lots in St. Peter's." The townsite boomers were in great glee, as they knew the governor was sure to sign the bill, but the opponents of the removal had by no means given up the fight. There were loud charges of bribery, and they were undoubtedly well founded in many cases. There was no money floating about those days, but a townsite company could distribute wealth with as much lavishness as Satan when he made his tempting offer at an early period in the world's existence. There were millions in the St. Peter townsite with the capital in view, and the promises of lots made by the land company were sufficient to give fortunes to everyone in the territory and still have abundance left for themselves.

While, of course, there is no such official record, it was stated at the time, and undisputed by the persons accused, that every member of either branch of the legislature voting for the capital removal had deeds for town lots in St. Peter already in his pocket. If there was anyone omitted it was certainly because he lacked legislative acumen.

Library of Congress

There was so much talk of this kind that, after an angry debate in the house, a committee of three was appointed to investigate, and later a resolution was adopted calling upon the committee to report, but nothing ever came of the matter.

In the senate a similar resolution was offered, but it went over until the next day, and no action was ever reached on it. On February 26th H. N. Setzer of Taylors Falls, who had offered the resolution for investigation, presented the following in the council:

Whereas suspicions of fraud exist in regard to the passage of No. 62 Council File, a bill for the removal of the seat of government of the Territory of Minnesota, therefore be it resolved that the committee on enrolled bills be, and are hereby, instructed to retain in their possession No. 62 Council File, a bill for the removal of the seat of government of the Territory of Minnesota, until otherwise ordered by the council.

This resolution provoked considerable debate, but was of course defeated by 6 yeas to 7 nays. Many of the members of the legislature receiving deeds for town lots put them on record at the register of deeds' office in Nicollet county; but the legislature did not propose to incriminate itself, and consequently it was wiser to stop the investigation.

JOE ROLETTE.

But now came the episode which saved the capital for St. Paul. Joe Rolette of Pembina was a member of the council. Joe has been commonly supposed to be a half or quarter breed Frenchman, but as a matter of fact he was a full-blooded French Canadian, and withal a very bright and intelligent man. He had been educated in the East, and was a warm friend of St. Paul. He was an especially warm friend of H. M. Rice, delegate to Congress from Minnesota when Minnesota was a territory. It was his custom at home to wear the garb of an Indian because there were almost no white men in his locality. But when he came to St. Paul he would go to the most fashionable tailor which the little village afforded and order the finest suit of clothes 29 which could be produced in the town. When

Library of Congress

they were completed Joe would don them and say to the tailor, "Send your bill to Mr. Rice." He never asked or had authority for any such proceeding, but Mr. Rice, who was a prince among men, never raised any question relative to Joe's authority, but simply paid the bills. So that after Joe had reached the city a short time he was the finest dressed man in town. Luckily for St. Paul, Joe was chairman of the enrollment committee in the council, and consequently the bill removing the capital to St. Peter came into his possession. He received it on the 27th day of February.

The best testimony that can be secured is to the effect that Joe had no intention originally of running away with the bill; but he was opposed to the removal and thought he would worry the St. Peter crowd. He boarded at the Fuller House, the leading hotel in the city at that time, located on the corner of Seventh and Jackson streets. Truman M. Smith had a bank on the ground floor of the hotel building. When Joe left the capitol on the 27th he took the enrolled bill with him, and before going up to the hotel dropped into the bank and, handing it to Mr. Smith, told him that was a valuable package, and, as he was going away for a little while, he wanted him to keep it until he returned. Then he went to the hotel and told Mr. Long, the proprietor, that he was going to change his room, taking one on the top floor of the building, and directing that it be given out at the office that he had left town. When he found the excitement he had created he concluded to remain in hiding. When the roll was called in the council on the 28th, Rolette's seat was vacant, and the capitol removers were nervous. A call of the council was ordered, and John M. Lamb, the sergeant-at-arms, was sent out to obtain the missing member. The full council was composed of fifteen members, and all were present but Joe. In an unguarded moment the capitol removers had consented to a call of the council, but they soon discovered that they were in a trap and were anxious to get out. John B. Brisbin of St. Paul, the president of the council, ruled that it required two-thirds to dispense with the call, whereupon Mr. Balcombe of Winona gravely argued that nine was two-thirds of fourteen. Mr. Balcombe spent half a day in his mathematical argument, but Brisbin was 30 obdurate, and the Winona mathematics made no impression upon him.

Library of Congress

In legislative proceedings, when there is a call ordered of a given body, no other business can be transacted unless by unanimous consent, save the production of the missing member or members; and consequently, so long as the call of the council was held to be good, nothing could be done until Joe was produced by the sergeant-at-arms.

When Balcombe was defeated in his mathematical argument, he offered a resolution calling upon Rolette, as chairman of the enrolling committee, to return the bill on that day, and, in case he did not, authorizing Mr. Wales, the next member of the committee, to procure another enrolled copy and report it to the council on Monday, that day being Saturday. A second resolution directed Mr. Wales to secure the signatures of the speaker of the house and the president of the council to the enrolled copy, and then take it to the governor for his signature. Balcombe read these resolutions himself, instead of sending them to the secretary's desk, and when he asked for action the president ruled that they were not before the body. Balcombe then offered to withdraw them, but the president ruled that, not having been presented, they could not be withdrawn. Balcombe was in something of the position of the new policeman who brought a prisoner to the door of the court room and called to the judge inside that the prisoner refused to come in.

"Bring him in," said the judge. "I can't," yelled the policeman. "Come in yourself without him," said the judge. "He won't let me," was the piteous reply of the policeman.

As the hours rolled on the situation became more aggravated. The five friends of St. Paul remained resolute, and the nine could not dispense with the call under the ruling of the chair.

Brisbin frequently called Mr. Setzer to the chair to preside, and one morning Mr. Setzer addressed Mr. Lamb, the sergeant-at-arms, saying to him, "Mr. Lamb, I do not believe you are doing your duty." Go out and bring Joe Rolette into this chamber, dead or alive." Setzer was a warm friend of St. Paul and did not want Joe produced at all.

Library of Congress

As a matter of fact, the friends of St. Paul knew where Joe was all the time, and Lamb was spending his nights in Joe's room playing cards with him, reporting each morning that he could not find him. Other St. Paul friends were doing the same thing. Joe was furnished with luxurious refreshments and was having the time of his life, as well as being the hero of the hour. Every night members of the legislature were with him until the small hours of the morning, and he was entirely happy, as he knew no punishment was likely to be inflicted.

The Sabbath dawned, and still the council was under the call. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday followed with the call in force. The journal of the legislature of that day is somewhat interesting. It is very much in skeleton form, but that it may be preserved in a record easy of access I quote from the journal of Feb. 28, 1857:

Mr. Setzer moved a call of the council, which was ordered, and, the roll being called, Mr. Rolette was absent.

The chair ordered the sergeant-at-arms to report Mr. Rolette in his seat.

Mr. Balcombe moved that all further proceedings under the call be dispensed with. Lost by 9 yeas to 5 nays, the president deciding that a two-thirds vote was necessary to suspend the call.

Mr. Balcombe rose in his place and contended that the declaration of the vote was incorrect, that 9 was two-thirds of 14, and the vote should have been declared in the affirmative.

The chair refused to change the declaration of the vote.

Mr. Balcombe claimed an appeal from the decision of the chair.

The chair refused to entertain the appeal.

Library of Congress

Mr. Bassett moved that the council adjourn, and upon the question there were yeas 9 and nays 4.

So the affirmative of the question prevailed, and the council adjourned at 1 p. m., March 5, A. D. 1857, after having continued in session without adjournment or recess 123 hours.

That is the skeleton official report of five days' proceedings while Joe Rolette was in hiding with the bill.

The adjournment was a compromise agreement that when the council should meet again it would still be under the call, and it so met on the 6th of March under that agreement. The session would expire by constitutional limitation on the next day, March 7th, and on the 6th the sergeant-at-arms, who had spent 32 the previous night in Joe Rolette's room, was ordered with great emphasis to produce Joe. The friends of St. Peter were exceedingly gloomy, and, finding it useless to remain in continuous session, agreed to another adjournment, with the council to reassemble for the last time on the 7th, the call still to be in force.

The last day the friends of St. Paul were so jubilant over results that they became almost reckless, and absolutely smuggled Joe into the capitol secretly. There had been no day or night during his absence when some members of the legislature had not been in Joe's society.

The council was to expire at 12 o'clock noon by constitutional limitation, and as the pointers of the clock reached that hour, President Brisbin rapped upon his desk to declare the adjournment. As he did so, by preconcerted arrangement, Joe Rolette burst into the council chamber with the bill and submitted a report. Brisbin, however, refused to take any chances, and simply replying, "You are too late, Mr. Rolette," declared the council adjourned. The report which Joe professed to desire to make read as follows:

Library of Congress

The committee on enrolled bills would respectfully report that, owing to the absence of the chairman of this committee, Bill No. 62, for the removal of the seat of government of the Territory of Minnesota, has not been reported back to the council.

Your committee would further state that the above mentioned bill might have been reported back to the council at this time, but that after examining the enrolled copy of said bill which was delivered to this committee, and comparing it with the engrossed bill by the secretary of this committee, we find numerous errors in the enrolled copy, some portions of the engrossed bill being left out of the enrolled copy, and matters being inserted in the enrolled copy which are not in the engrossed bill. Your committee cannot, therefore, report the said bill as correctly enrolled, but retain the same in our possession subject to the order of the council.

The interesting feature of this report is that it begins with the claim that it could not have been earlier reported back, owing to the absence of the chairman, and still is signed by Joe Rolette as chairman of the enrolling committee.

An effort was made, in spite of all this, to declare the bill carried. A copy of the bill in some form was taken to Governor Gorman, and, as he was in the removal scheme, he promptly signed it. But it could not become a law without the signature of Mr. Brisbin, president of the council, and he, being a resident of and resolute friend of St. Paul, checkmated the scheme. Mr. Brisbin gave the following seven reasons why he refused to sign:

1. It was not transmitted from the council to the house by an official message.
2. It did not come to me from the secretary of the council.
3. It was not enrolled under the direction of the secretary.
4. It was not reported by the enrolling committee.

Library of Congress

5. I have no evidence that any bill of the contents of the accompanying ever passed the council.

6. The certificate purporting to be made by the secretary of the council was not signed by him.

7. The bill had been out of the hands of the enrolling committee and in the possession of two other members of the council to the personal knowledge of the president.

These seven reasons are attached to the bill and published with the law itself in the volume of territorial laws for 1857.

Brisbin's 5th and 7th reasons put in juxtaposition remind one of the man arraigned for horse-stealing, who submitted the double plea that he never had a horse, and if he did have a horse he didn't steal him.

Governor Gorman appointed W. A. Davis of Belle Plaine, Scott county, M. Grover of St. Charles, Winona county, and D. A. Secombe, capitol commissioners to erect a building at St. Peter. They advertised for proposals, and, in contrast with the way more modern and expensive state capitols are erected, the specifications are interesting. They ran as follows:

Said building is to be of brick or stone, of two stories, the lower one about 20 feet in height. The upper story is to contain two rooms, about 50 by 60 feet each, and one room about 40 by 50. The lower story is to contain at least 12 rooms.

Even that modest building does not seem to have been erected, but the land company and enterprising citizens of St. Peter erected a frame building for capitol purposes, which was used for many years as the Nicollet County Court House. 3

Library of Congress

On June 29, 1857, A. F. Howes, president of the St. Peter Land Company, applied to Judge R. R. Nelson, one of the justices of the territorial court, for a writ of mandamus to compel the removal of the state officers from St. Paul to St. Peter. On July 12th Judge Nelson filed his decision which, after a somewhat elaborate argument, concluded thus:

We are of the opinion, therefore, that there has been no law passed by the legislative power of the territory removing the capital from St. Paul to St. Peter. The application for mandamus is therefore refused.

And thus in a few lines perished the high hopes of St. Peter and the land speculators who had sought to make their fortunes by the capital removal.

After the legislature had finally adjourned, Joe Rolette was the lion of the hour. A great torchlight procession was made up, headed by a band, and Joe was escorted in triumph through the streets of the little city.

Joe was in no sense a corrupt man, and did not take the action he had with any view of pecuniary reward; and still the citizens of St. Paul, in their gratitude, raised a purse of \$2,500 and presented it to him after the matter was all over. But Joe was a prince in social hospitality, and, while he accepted the \$2,500, he remained in St. Paul long enough to expend nearly the whole sum in having a good time, so that practically the gift was taking it out of one pocket and putting it into the other.

A story was told of Joe which illustrates his business sagacity as well as his idea of legislation. While he was a member of the legislature the Minnesota Valley Railroad land grants were pending, the parcelling out of lands granted by Congress to the territory for railroad purposes. It was not supposed in those days, and perhaps it is not even later, that any such thing as a land grant can be given away without the recipients being levied upon for a portion of the proceeds. The Minnesota Valley company, accordingly, had very finely engraved stock certificates printed, which were marked "Paid up," and offered them freely

Library of Congress

in \$5,000 lots to members of the legislature if they would pass the bill which they wished, disposing of the lands to a local company. 35 A friend of Joe approached him when the bill was pending and said to him:

“Now, these are our own people, Joe, that want this land, and you ought to help us. I think that I can get you \$5,000 paid up stock if you will vote for the bill.”

Joe thought a few minutes, and, with the shrewdness for which he was remarkable, replied:

“I don't know anything about your paid-up stock, but if you give me \$300 cash, it's a go.”

Possibly Joe got the cash; at all events he voted for the bill.

A member of the same legislature was drowned a few months after the legislature adjourned, and among his effects the administrator found one of these \$5,000 paid-up certificates of stock. When the administrator came to settle the estate he sold it at auction as a curio for \$5. Based on this as a business transaction Joe was evidently \$295 ahead of the man who was drowned.

Another incident of that celebrated 123 hours' session was the refreshment bill rendered by Mr. Long, proprietor of the Fuller House, where most of the members stopped. Of course, he was interested in St. Paul retaining the capital, and, while they were locked up, he was very enthusiastic and sent up bounteous refreshments, in which wine was a large factor. He kept encouraging the St. Paul friends to stand together, and he would keep them supplied with the best there was on earth as long as they would remain. The council chamber was a sight to behold when the long session, without adjournment or recess, had concluded. No one had been allowed to leave the room, even for the direst necessity, except in charge of a sergeant-at-arms. But when it was all over, and St. Paul had won, Mr. Long's business ideas overcame his supposed generosity and patriotism

Library of Congress

while the struggle was pending, and he rendered a bill for \$500 for refreshments, which, after a good deal of haggling and parleying, was duly paid.

There hangs in the Historical Society rooms, in the present state capitol, a life-sized portrait of Joe Rolette, presented to the society by the late Judge Flandrau, which bears this inscription:

Joe Rolette, who saved the capital to St. Paul by running away with the bill to remove it to St. Peter, 1857.

36

It was the popular impression at the time that Joe absolutely had run away from the city, and to keep up the semblance of that the sergeant-at-arms sent runners to his former home in Prairie du Chien and his then residence at Pembina, though the sergeant was having a good time with Joe every evening. That was a secret known to probably 15 or 20 persons at the time, and it is surprising that it was kept a secret as long as it was. But if Joe had been found and produced *vi et armis* in the council he had taken such precaution that he would not have had the bill with him, and the worst that could have happened to him would have been temporary imprisonment. Consequently, he did not take very serious chances, though he rendered an invaluable service to St. Paul, which will never be forgotten, and without which St. Paul would not be the St. Paul of to-day.

W. P. MURRAY.

As Hon. W. P. Murray of St. Paul has figured quite conspicuously in this capital removal, and as he was one of the boon companions who spent evenings with Joe Rolette while he was concealing the capital removal bill, as well as having occupied many public positions since, it is perhaps appropriate to give some space to show how he happened to get his start in political life. We all know him in St. Paul as plain "Bill" Murray, but for the purposes of this history and to the state at large I record him as Hon. William P. Murray.

Library of Congress

He had come to Minnesota from Indiana a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat; and at the time he entered political life it was as much a surprise to him as a stroke of lightning would have been. In some way he became quite a favorite of James M. Goodhue, the editor of the Pioneer and Democrat at St. Paul. Perhaps this was because there were very few people in St. Paul, and Goodhue had to have some favorites; at all events Mr. Murray could never account for the fancy which Goodhue took to him.

A little over a year after his arrival an election for member of the territorial legislature was due. He was going along the street one day when Goodhue stopped him and said, "Bill, how would you like to go to the legislature?" Of course, he was only plain Bill Murray then, but since he has reached the proportions 37 of Hon. William P. Murray he says if it should now be seriously proposed to elect him president of the United States he would not be more surprised than he was at Goodhue's suggestion. He replied that he would be very glad to go to the legislature, but he had only been here a short time, and there was no use of his thinking about it. Goodhue assured him that there was, and, if he wanted it, he (Goodhue) would see that the Democrats nominated him.

The Democratic convention was duly called, and four members of the legislature were to be named. Goodhue and his protégé were on hand, and Goodhue notified the manipulators that he wanted Bill to be one of the nominees. They very decidedly demurred and told Goodhue that the slate was made up and it was too late. Goodhue was an aggressive man, and felt his power as having the only Democratic paper. So he told them, "Go ahead, but I will knock hell out of your ticket." They knew that Goodhue was a man of his word, and this was a warning which could not be ignored. The manipulators consulted a few minutes and concluded that there was room on the ticket for Murray after all. There were 76 men in the convention, and when it came to nominate members of the legislature Bill was one of those selected, receiving 75 votes. He was triumphantly elected, and thus began his public career. The Hon. William Pitt Murray of to-day can therefore be pointed to as a living object of the power of the press.

OBSERVATION FIVE.

How Minneapolis Might Have Been the Capital of the State If Her Own Members of the Legislature Had Been Sharp and Wise.

As an aftermath to the attempted removal of the capital from St. Paul to St. Peter, and also as a forgotten incident of history, it is well to here record the fact that Minneapolis narrowly escaped obtaining the capital at that time. When the state house burned in St. Paul, in March, 1881, Minneapolis made a vigorous effort to secure the capital, tendering the state Loring Park for the purpose of a new capitol building. It is probably due to the Hon. John S. Pillsbury of Minneapolis, then governor of the state, more than to any other one man that the movement did not succeed. And still at the time of the attempted removal to St. Peter it was Minneapolis members of the territorial legislature who prevented that city obtaining the capital. So that the fact of the permanent location of the capital and capitol building in St. Paul can be credited to Minneapolis.

The bill for the removal of the capital to St. Peter had passed the council, a body which corresponded to our present senate, and the votes in the house had demonstrated that the land pool was sufficiently strong to pass it in that body. Governor Gorman was one of the leaders in the St. Peter movement, so that there was no hope from him, and defeat for St. Paul seemed as certain as anything in the future can be. Under these circumstances the members from St. Paul and their friends decided to put in effect the loose talk relative to Nicollet Island and give Minneapolis the capital as the choice of two evils. Minneapolis was not much more than a hamlet, while St. Anthony was quite a town; but the two combined had about as much strength in 39 the legislature as St. Paul. W. P. Murray of St. Paul was selected to make the tender, and under date of February 17th, page 166, legislative journal, this paragraph appears relative to the capital removal bill then under consideration:

Library of Congress

Mr. Murray moved to amend the bill by striking out the word "St. Peter" wherever it occurs and insert "Nicollet Island, between Minneapolis and St. Anthony;" also strike out the second section.

The second section was the offer of the St. Peter Land Company to donate a site of ten acres and to give \$20,000 in cash for a capitol (this was the sum appropriated by the general government for a capitol at St. Paul), and also provide a temporary building for the meeting of the legislature until such time as the capital could be removed. By substituting Nicollet Island for St. Peter and striking out this second section, Minneapolis was absolutely put in the place of St. Paul, and the tender of the capital was thus made without money and without price. The government appropriation for the building would have been expended at Minneapolis instead of St. Paul, and as the bill did not go to the people, the removal would have been absolute and complete.

I do not assume that this offer was made for any especial love for Minneapolis, but I am satisfied it was made in good faith, for the double reason that St. Paul was enraged at the St. Peter crowd, and if she could not keep the capital herself preferred to have it in the neighborhood.

Since I began work upon this book I have talked with Mr. Murray in person, and he assures me most positively that he made the proposition in the utmost good faith, and intended to carry it through if he could. I think it will surprise a good many people of Minneapolis at this date to learn that this proposition was lost by the votes of the St. Anthony and Minneapolis members, while every member from St. Paul, five in number, voted to give Minneapolis the prize.

The vote by which Mr. Murray's amendment was lost was 18 for it and 19 against it, and among the 18 were William Branch, A. T. Chamblin, William P. Murray, William Costello and J. C. Ramsey, all of St. Paul, with Asa Keith and W. Hayden 40 of Minneapolis. There were no St. Paul votes against, but there were Jonathan Chase and Henry Heichtman

Library of Congress

of St. Anthony, and John M. Troll and J. P. Plummer of Minneapolis in the negative. Here were four St. Anthony and Minneapolis votes in the negative, which, if transposed, would have carried the capital to Nicollet Island by a vote of 22 to 15 against. This is assuming that the St. Anthony and Minneapolis members went over, which would be very natural, and leaving all the other St. Peterites to stick to their text. One of the excuses as given by the St. Anthony and Minneapolis members of the house for voting as they did was that it was a trick on the part of St. Paul to send the bill back to the council with an amendment and there kill the whole scheme. I think this was erroneous, and their action was a fatal mistake for them. The bill had passed the council by the close vote of 8 to 7. Among the 8 voting for the bill were W. W. Wales of St. Anthony and Joel B. Bassett of Minneapolis. Of the 7 voting in the negative subsequent proceedings proved that only one, Mr. Tillotson, could under any circumstances be relied upon to go to the side of St. Peter. The St. Anthony-Minneapolis members of the council therefore, by changing their votes to Nicollet Island if the amended bill had ever reached them, would have been sure of 6 votes uniting with them, which would have reversed the figures and passed the bill in the council, giving Minneapolis the capital by 8 to 7. Quotations from the record I have already made demonstrate beyond denial that the Nicollet Island bill would have passed the house if Minneapolis had supported it, and as corroborative evidence that it could also pass the council, I cite that an indignation meeting was held at Minneapolis at Woodman's Hall, on February 28th, for the special purpose of censuring Messrs. Bassett and Wales, members of the council, because they had favored St. Peter instead of Minneapolis. Bear in mind that this censure was adopted without their having absolutely voted against Minneapolis, and in consequence must have been made on the basis that they would do so, or that they had been influential in defeating the Nicollet Island scheme in the house. The meeting in question was presided over by John H. Spear, with H. S. Plummer as secretary. The committee on resolutions was composed of E. Murphy, F. R. E. Cornell, Dr. Anderson, W. J. Parkson, 41 and W. A. Hotchkiss. Mr. Hotchkiss was editor of the Minnesota Democrat, printed at Minneapolis, and subsequently repudiated the resolutions. Mr. Cornell was the orator of the occasion, though many others spoke, and he roundly censured Bassett

Library of Congress

and Wells and also the members of the house who had refused to sustain Murray's amendment.

It was claimed at the time that there were 600 present, and only 2 negative votes were cast on the resolutions, which were as follows:

Whereas, We learn that there is a determination on a part of the majority of the members of the legislative assembly of this territory to remove the capital from St. Paul; and

Whereas, There is now a bill before said legislative assembly, or about to be produced, for their consideration, providing for the removal and permanent location of the capital to Nicollet Island, subject to the approval of the building; therefore,

Resolved , That believing it to be a matter of great importance to the citizens of the Eleventh Council District, and particularly to the immediate constituency of the councilmen and members of Hennepin county, we do urgently request our member of the council and members of the house to use all lawful and honorable means to secure the passage of the bill above referred to.

Resolved , That we emphatically disapprove of the votes given by the Hon. Joel B. Bassett of the Council, and the Hon. J. P. Plummer of the house upon the bill providing for the removal of the capital from St. Paul to St. Peter, as being in direct conflict with the best interests of their constituents, and we heartily approve the course pursued by the Hon. W. D. Smith, Asa Keith and Samuel Hayden in opposition to said measure, and tender them, therefore, the plaudit "Well done, good and faithful servants."

Smith was in favor of Nicollet Island, but was absent, owing to sickness, when the vote was taken.

As further corroborative evidence, showing that Minneapolis could have secured the state capital at the time mentioned, it can be cited that a counter meeting was held on March

Library of Congress

3d to defend the St. Anthony and Minneapolis members for their course in spurning the proposition. A report of this meeting was sent officially to the Minnesotian, published at St. Paul, and an extract from that is perhaps the best evidence. I accordingly quote from the Minnesotian of March 6, 1857:

42

The meeting was addressed by the Hon. J. B. Bassett. In the course of his remarks he stated the reason why he voted for the removal to St. Peter and the bearing it possibly would have on the future growth and prosperity of St. Anthony and Minneapolis, clearly showing that it was for the interest of these towns to have the seat of government at some place where the members of the legislature would not be bought and sold like sheep in the shambles.

It is really sad to think that Mr. Bassett should have had so poor an opinion of the locality in the neighborhood of Nicollet Island as his remarks indicate.

Another argument deduced was that if Minneapolis got the capital she would lose the university. At that time the university was so small an affair compared with the capital that this did not seem a strong argument. At this time the university is the more valuable of the two. However, the meeting was called to endorse the members of the legislature for refusing to accept the great gift, and, of course, it had to be done. This meeting was presided over by Charles Clarke. C. G. Ames, C. Beebee and H. B. Wright were the committee on resolutions. Minneapolis was evidently short of secretaries in those days, and H. S. Plummer was accordingly secretary of this meeting, just as he had been of the other one three days previous. The resolutions adopted, which really practically concede that the capital might have been secured, were as follows:

Whereas, At a public meeting, held in this place, on Saturday evening last, resolutions were adopted disapproving of the course of Hon. J. B. Bassett and Hon. J. P. Plummer in voting for the removal of the seat of government to St. Peter; and

Library of Congress

Whereas, The reasons which induced these honorable gentlemen thus to vote were not then properly understood as we now understand them, after hearing the statements of Hon. J. B. Bassett relative thereto; therefore,

Resolved , That we regard the adoption of those resolutions as premature, and are satisfied that the argument in justification of the course of the gentlemen aforesaid is at least as sound and weighty as that adduced by those in opposition to the removal.

Resolved , That while we urgently desire to see the establishment of the capital on Nicollet Island, we are nevertheless unwilling that the members of the legislature from Hennepin county should use any dishonorable means or endanger any other important interest to secure that object.

43

Resolved , That we have entire confidence in the integrity and good sense of the honorable gentlemen both referred to, and are pleased to know that they have not allowed themselves to be outgeneraled by those who would make the aggrandizement of St. Paul the chief end of all legislation.

As additional evidence of the failure of the people of Minneapolis to grasp the situation at that time and take advantage of it, I quote from an editorial in the Minneapolis Democrat of March 7th. The paper was edited by W. A. Hotchkiss. At that time he said:

About the middle of last week we met in the assembly chamber in St. Paul, Messrs. J. H. Spear, Colonel Case, E. Murphy and others, citizens of this place, and were solicited by them to approach councilors and representatives from this county and request them to repeal the law removing the capital to St. Peter, preparatory to the presentation of another bill to remove it to Nicollet Island. We positively refused to meddle with the matter one way or the other unless the bill specified two points to be voted on by the people—and those Nicollet Island and St. Peter.

Library of Congress

There is a wonderful amount of circumlocution in these resolutions because the real point at issue was not the introduction of the bill locating the capital on Nicollet Island, but the simple striking out of the name "St. Peter" in the bill, which had already passed the council and was sure to pass the house, and inserting in lieu of St. Peter the words "Nicollet Island." That would have settled the whole matter, and the votes of the Minneapolis members of the legislature could have carried it if they had not feared there was some trick on the part of St. Paul.

Major Hotchkiss, in another issue of his paper, said:

It is well known to every man in St. Anthony and Minneapolis that there never has been a measure brought before the legislature of this territory for the benefit of those towns that St. Paul did not oppose with all her ability.

It is beyond all question that Mr. Murray's proposed amendment was not offered from any love for St. Anthony or Minneapolis, but solely for the purpose of defeating the St. Peter crowd. It was offered in good faith, and it was one of those 44 opportunities which the members from St. Anthony and Minneapolis did not have breadth of vision to grasp. Of course, all St. Paul is especially glad that the Minneapolis members were so stupid, and by the same token all Minneapolis, when they read these lines, will feel especially sad that they were so stupid.

In noting this it is well to study the closeness of the vote. St. Peter had only carried the bill by a majority of one, and, with the reversing of the Minneapolis votes which were cast for St. Peter and adding to them the St. Paul votes which were ready to be given to Nicollet Island in a burst of indignation, the bill could have been passed beyond peradventure.

The Joe Rolette incident had not been thought of at that time; in fact, that was a mere incident beginning as a joke and only carried to a successful conclusion after Joe found that he was the hero of the day.

Library of Congress

Time has softened the asperities between St. Paul and Minneapolis, and the new \$4,500,000 capitol in St. Paul, now nearing completion, has in the main received support from the Minneapolis members of the legislature, though there has been occasional objection to some of the increased appropriations.

I have quoted from the indignation meeting and from the defense meeting as well to demonstrate the claim that Minneapolis might have had the capital but for the indiscretion, not to use a severer word, of her own members of the Minnesota legislature in 1857. Having no desire to harrow up the feelings of my Minneapolis friends, I draw the veil, leaving them to erect a monument on Nicollet Island at some future time bearing the inscription,

Of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these, *It might have been* .

45

OBSERVATION SIX.

Peculiarities of Early Legislation.

There are probably many peculiar things in connection with the early times in any state, and certainly Minnesota proved no exception to the general rule. The first state legislature met between five and six months before the state was admitted. When the latter part of March was reached the legislature, being weary of doing business on an uncertainty, took a recess from the 25th of March to the 2nd of June. Here were sixty-eight days apparently gone to waste, as holding office was one of the prominent industries of the embryo state. How to get paid for doing nothing during the recess period was quite a problem, but an ingenious solution was finally discovered. The session was resumed in June, 1858, and on the 9th of August Thomas A. Thompson of Wabasha county offered the following resolution:

Library of Congress

Resolved , That the chief clerk is hereby instructed to draw certificates for stationery in favor of members that wishes to take the same for \$75. The members taking the certificates shall sign and receipt in full to the state for all demands they may have for pay during the vacation from the 25th of March to the 7th of June.

Motions were made to reduce the amount to \$30, \$25 and \$5, but they were all promptly voted down, and the resolution was passed by a vote of 38 to 25. It might be a fair presumption to assume that some of the 25 were opposed to the resolution on the ground of its ungrammatical construction, rather than because it gave \$75 per head from the treasury. By the terms of the resolution it will be noted that "such members that wishes to take the same" had the privilege, but it was not compulsory. The state records only disclose two members who did not come 46 under the head "that wishes." These were E. Bray of Carver and Robert C. Masters of Dakota county. Mr. Masters turned his certificate back with a caustic endorsement written thereon. The certificates themselves were certainly unique. They were printed about the length of a check, occupying a piece of paper about the size of an ordinary letter sheet. To show the unique manner in which stationery can be commuted into per diem by an able legislature, I quote the one issued to Mr. Masters, as follows:

\$75.00 State of Minnesota, St. Paul, Aug. 9, 1858.

This is to certify that Mr. R. C. Masters, member of the house of representatives of the State of Minnesota, is entitled to the sum of \$75.00 for stationery, in accordance with the resolution passed the house of representatives Aug. 9, 1858.

(Signed) A. T. CHAMBLIN, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Notwithstanding this was an order for stationery, the receipt for which was drawn upon the same piece of paper was salary. It read as follows:

Library of Congress

\$75.00 State of Minnesota, St. Paul, Aug. 9, 1858.

Received of the treasurer of the State of Minnesota \$75.00, being in full of all demands as member of the house of representatives of the State of Minnesota during the recess of the first legislature of the State of Minnesota, commencing March 25, 1858, and ending June 2, 1858.

(Signed) ROBERT C. MASTERS.

Mr. Masters signed the receipt just as quoted, and not only declined to accept the money but left the document in the archives of the state with this endorsement upon its back:

I do hereby certify that I have protested by my votes in March, June, July and August against the issue of any certificates for per diem of members of the legislature from the 25th of March to the 2nd day of June, 1858, and that I do hereby relinquish to the state all claim which I may appear to possess on the treasury for the sum of \$75 by virtue of the within certificate. The auditor or treasurer is hereby requested to file this certificate with my final and everlasting protest against this high-handed mode of public plundering the state treasury of Minnesota.

ROBERT C. MASTERS.

Dated Aug. 13, 1858. Signed in the presence of William F. Wheeler.

Mr. Masters' request was duly granted, and his "everlasting protest" is still on file at the state auditor's office, where it can be seen by those who are curious enough to wish to inspect the handwriting of an "honest man."

Mr. Bray was not so emphatic in his endorsement. He did not, like Mr. Masters, sign and return the receipt, but simply filed the certificate issued by the chief clerk and wrote this upon the back:

Library of Congress

I herewith relinquish my claim and interest to the within certificate and donate the same to the State of Minnesota.

E. BRAY, Carver, Aug. 14, 1858.

If any other members declined to accept the stationery dodge as a dishonest deal there is no record to be found, and I accordingly embalm Messrs. Masters and Bray in history as the most remarkable men in Minnesota during the remarkable era of 1857 and 1858.

The ingenuity of the scheme of making a raid on the treasury and calling it stationery may become a pointer to future legislatures, but if it should I think there has been sufficient advancement in business methods for them to refuse to print upon the same sheet of paper the modus operandi of the procedure. It is bad enough to do that, but when in addition a man was asked to sign his name to the grab it became still worse. It was a cleaner give away than Oakes-Ames Credit Mobilier memorandum book. But those were early days, and there has been great advancement in legislative methods since 1858.

48

OBSERVATION SEVEN.

Election of the First State Governor.

The first election for governor in the State of Minnesota was largely a contest over election returns more than a contest for votes. It was altogether a wild and woolly affair. It occurred Oct. 13, 1857, H. H. Sibley of Mendota being the Democratic nominee and Alexander Ramsey of St. Paul the Republican.

The state was only partially settled and absolutely without telegraph or railroads, so that it required weeks to determine the result. Without a great deal of delay a sufficient number of returns were received to show that the election would be very close; and, pending the time

Library of Congress

of the receipt of the official vote, the Republican and Democratic papers indulged in claims of success for their respective parties.

It was a good deal more like an anti-election canvass than simply a controversy as to the count, and the principle that "there is no use lying after election" was completely lost sight of. It would probably be the truth to say that there was just as much irregularity practiced on both sides as circumstances would permit. The matter of conscience had not emigrated as far west as Minnesota in that early day.

On the 26th of October, thirteen days after the election, the Minnesotian, published in St. Paul, a Republican organ, figured up the returns and claimed 660 majority for Ramsey. The St. St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat the next day analyzed the claim of the Minnesotian, pointing out several errors, and made this significant paragraph and conclusion:

Added to the above, Pembina county is yet to be heard from. According to our figures Ramsey is not as yet out of the woods.

49

The Minnesotian also claimed that a secret caucus of the Democrats was held in St. Paul on the 26th of October, at which it was decided to send up to Joe Rolette at Pembina to see that the returns came down in proper shape to settle the election. The Pioneer and Democrat had violently denounced this charge as a falsehood, the very mildest expression used being to call the editor of the Minnesotian a "liar," and consequently the gentle allusion to Pembina county, which I have quoted, carried a sting which lashed the Minnesotian into a violent rage.

When the constitutional convention concluded its work on the constitution proper it made an addenda which was termed a schedule, and this schedule provided that the governor of the territory, Joseph R. Brown and Thomas J. Galbraith should be a canvassing board to

Library of Congress

canvass the votes cast at the October election. Gov. Samuel Medary and Brown were both Democrats, and Galbraith a Republican.

It was not until December 18th that the returns were received to enable the official canvass to proceed. The canvass of the counties was made by the respective registers of deeds, and the registers had in some cases rejected some of the precinct returns. Brown was exceedingly shrewd in politics, and he had ascertained in advance that the returns made by the registers, with some precincts rejected, were more favorable to Sibley than if the canvassing board should open the question and go behind the official canvass made in the various counties. Under the schedule of the constitution the powers of this canvassing board were substantially unlimited, and they could have opened up every county return in the state. Brown, accordingly, set a deep trap for Galbraith, the Republican member of the board, by offering the following resolution:

Resolved , That the votes returned from the several counties by the proper canvassing officers, together with the returns from precincts, of the establishment of which the board have been legally informed, shall form the basis upon which the election of state officers shall be declared by the board of canvassers.

Brown would have been terribly disappointed if Galbraith had favored this resolution. He could not, of course, vote against it himself, and consequently whatever Governor Medary did, 4 50 Galbraith could have carried it by voting with Brown. Instead of that he fell into Brown's trap and offered the following as a substitute:

Resolved , That the duly canvassed returns from the several counties be adopted as the basis of calculation by the board of canvassers.

This tied them down exactly as Brown desired, and he had induced the other fellow to do it. Medary and Galbraith voted for the substitute, Medary understanding the situation, while Brown suspended his internal chuckling long enough to vote "NO."

Library of Congress

How the Minnesotian did rave and abuse Brown and Medary the next day when the canvass developed that, under Brown's resolution, 4,058 votes would have been counted, which were rejected under Galbraith's resolution, 1,930 of them being for Sibley and 2,128 for Ramsey.

The official canvass, as officially made, showed 35,340 votes cast in the entire state, a smaller number than Minneapolis now polls. Of this number Sibley was given 17,790 and Ramsey 17,550, a majority of 240 for Sibley.

While Galbraith's resolution would not have absolutely changed the result, it would have reduced Sibley's majority to 42. The Minnesotian assumed to prove, to its own satisfaction, that Ramsey had 80 majority, and then proceeded to claim that his real majority was 600.

To show something of the wildness of these statements, I note that prior to the official canvass the Minnesotian alleged that Cottonwood and Redwood counties had given over 100 votes for Sibley and none for Ramsey, while in the former there were but four inhabitants and in the latter but three. This was cited as a sample of intended Democratic frauds; but in the forty-one counties, which were officially canvassed, neither Cottonwood nor Redwood was reported as having cast a single vote.

The Pioneer and Democrat had also been just as busily reciting Republican frauds, so that the impartial historian is fully justified in concluding that honors were easy. It is worthy of note, however, that the Cass and Pembina district, where Joe Rolette reigned supreme, was very unanimous for Sibley, giving him in Pembina 316 votes and in Cass 228, while Ramsey did 51 not receive a vote in either county. Those were the only counties where there were not some votes for Ramsey. Sibley received the certificate and served his first term as the first governor of the State of Minnesota.

Library of Congress

This was the election where Indians were permitted to vote under certain restrictions. One section of the election law, passed by the territorial legislature Nov. 1, 1849, contained this provision:

That all persons of a mixture of white and Indian blood, and who shall have adopted the habits and customs of civilized men, are hereby declared to be entitled to all the rights and privileges granted by the provisions of this act.

This practically conferred the right of suffrage upon all the half-breeds in the territory. The clause as to what should be considered the habits and customs of civilized men was liberally interpreted by the judges of election. It is safe to assume that they had many habits of civilized men which possibly would not pass muster at the polls; but by common consent it was decided that half-breeds wearing pantaloons filled the requirement.

A tradition has come down to later generations to the effect that one pair of pants would do service for a swarm of half-breeds. One would don the trousers and go out and vote, and, soon coming back, passed the garment over to the next man, while he resumed his breech clout and blanket. If the Australian ballot had been invented at that time the freedom of suffrage would have been very much curtailed.

Notwithstanding the liberality of the territorial law, when Minnesota became a state, she became still more anxious for voters. The territory only allowed half-breeds to vote, but the state was so liberal that it extended the suffrage to full-blooded Indians. Here is a section from a law passed in 1861:

Any male person of Indian blood over twenty-one years of age, who shall desire to become a citizen of this state, shall appear before a district court of the state in regular term and shall establish by at least two witnesses, one of whom shall be a white man, that he is possessed of the following qualifications:

First. A just idea of the nature of an oath.

Library of Congress

Second. A fixed residence in a house as distinguished from a tepee or wigwam.

52

Third. That he has been, for at least two years immediately preceding his application to said court, engaged in the cultivation of the soil, or in the trades, or in any other strictly civilized pursuit.

Fourth. That he has, during said term of two years, assumed the habits and worn the dress of civilization.

Fifth. That he is a man of correct general demeanor and possessed of good moral character.

The clause relative to witnesses to vouch for the Indian in court reminds one of the story of the interview Brown and Jones, two intimate friends, had with Smith. They met Smith on the street, and the following dialogue ensued:

Brown: "Mr. Smith, my friend Jones would like to make a little loan of you."

Smith: "That will be all right, but who will vouch for him?"

Brown: "Oh, I will vouch for him."

Smith: "But who will vouch for you?"

Brown: "Jones will vouch for me."

The prevaricator who invented this story does not say whether the loan was made, but it is safe to say that under the Minnesota law the Indian who vouched for another Indian was accepted as a satisfactory guarantor.

Library of Congress

The Indian did not seem to have much gratitude for having citizenship conferred upon him, for the next year he rose up in his savage atrocity and slaughtered 600 or 700 white men, women and children on our frontier. Possibly this law was forgotten, for, in spite of the massacre, it remained on our statute books until the revision of the laws in 1878. Nevertheless, we recognize a good many people as citizens who can hardly conform to the fifth requirement in the law of 1861, quoted above. But we must not be too punctilious, or there would not be so much fun at elections. It is more than probable that the half-breed law had a good deal to do with the unanimity of the vote for Sibley in Joe Rolette's district. It has always been regarded as certain that the first governor of Minnesota was elected by the vote of the half-breeds. But what else could you do? We had to have a governor, and inhabitants of Scandinavian countries had not then moved into Minnesota. Consequently, somebody had to do the voting, and in the emergency the half-breed, if he could borrow a pair of pants, was as good as anybody else.

53

OBSERVATION EIGHT.

The First Delegate to Congress from Minnesota Was from Wisconsin.

The first delegate Minnesota ever had in Congress was from Wisconsin, because there was no such place as Minnesota. This is a sufficient jumble to be worthy of a place in a book of puzzles. It so happened that what is now Minnesota, or a portion of it, was once Wisconsin, just as Wisconsin is in some sense an offshoot from her elder sister Michigan. The act which transformed Wisconsin from a territory to a state in 1848 defined the boundaries of the state, but left a portion of what had been embraced in the territory an orphan, subject to the tender mercies of a cold, cold world.

The boundary line of the State of Wisconsin was the St. Croix river, while Stillwater, St. Paul, St. Anthony and whatever little towns there were in this region had been in the territory of Wisconsin, they were not part of the State of Wisconsin. It was difficult to tell

Library of Congress

where they were at. There were no laws or courts or officers unless something could be done to rehabilitate the apparently friendless strip of land. The people then here shrewdly concluded there could be two Wisconsin—one a state, the other a territory. As usual, the governor of the Territory of Wisconsin, Dodge, had been elected to the senate from the state, and his territorial secretary, John Catlin, was ex officio master of ceremonies. At the request of the citizens occupying the orphaned remnant of territory, he came over from the State of Wisconsin to Stillwater and issued a proclamation declaring that the Territory of Wisconsin still lived, and called for an election of a delegate to Congress. And thus the double-headed Wisconsin was brought into existence that Minnesota, the greater, might spring from her loins. The handful of people then in the Territory of Wisconsin very wisely selected the late Gen. H. H. Sibley as a delegate, and sent him to Washington to make further arrangements. Of course, the two Wisconsin could not be a permanency, and Sibley, accordingly, devoted his energies to forming the Territory of Minnesota. In this effort he was greatly aided by being recognized as a delegate from the Territory of Wisconsin, something quite unusual, which gave him the right to be heard upon the floor of Congress.

It must have been a little peculiar when the speaker was called upon to recognize the “gentleman from Wisconsin,” and it was almost necessary to have a diagram go with the recognition to determine whether the gentleman was from the State or Territory of Wisconsin.

Gen. Zach. Taylor had been elected president by the Whigs in 1848, and was due to take his seat in March, 1849, while President Polk was concluding the Democratic administration.

When an administration forms a territory or admits a state, the politics and offices connected with the act usually prove a determining factor, and the new candidate stands by the administration which gives it life. The senate was Democratic and the house was Whig; so that here was a small population seeking national recognition during the expiring

hours of a Democratic administration, to be succeeded by the incoming of the Whig, with the Congress divided against itself. If it came into existence by aid of the Democrats it could be expected to be Democratic; and if delayed until the Whigs assumed control of national affairs it would be expected to be Whig. It was a case of aerial suspension, typical of the supposed condition of Mahomet's coffin. The odd feature of the whole affair was that so much time had been consumed in passing the act forming the Territory of Minnesota that Polk's term was just expiring, the measure becoming a law on the 3d of March, 1849.

Except to save the bill from defeat in the quarrel, it made little difference whether it went into effect on March 3d or March 10th, for President Polk, very much to his credit, declined to appoint a Democratic governor and other officers for the new territory the last day of his term, though the senate would have confirmed them as it was in political accord with him. Therefore Sibley, an ardent Democrat himself, had secured the formation of a territory with Whig officers, a situation of which President Taylor of course availed himself by appointing Alexander Ramsey governor, with the usual retinue of judges, district attorney, etc., all Whigs. On June 1, 1849, Governor Ramsey proceeded to proclaim the organization of Minnesota territory, and Acting Governor Catlin of Wisconsin's pronunciamento became a thing of the past. It had done its perfect work as an emergency act, and proven that in political and governmental life, as well as in other matters, necessity is the mother of invention.

56

OBSERVATION NINE.

The First Election of Alexander Ramsey to the Senate and the Contest with Cyrus Aldrich.

The late Governor Marshall had much to do with establishing the Ramsey dynasty, which ruled the political fortunes of Minnesota for the first twenty years of statehood. Governor Ramsey was not during this entire period in the foreground, but the dynasty he and his

Library of Congress

friends had established was, and on top as well Governor Marshall was one of his firmest friends, and, with Mr. Wheelock as his lieutenant, can practically be said to have made the dynasty. In 1860 Governor Marshall established the St. Paul Press, and thus brought together and wiped out a good many discordant elements in the party and established one party organ, in place of the three or four which had, for years, been clawing at each other, and incidentally at the party. Marshall always supported Ramsey in his Press, and, when he went to the war, Mr. Wheelock, who was commissioner of statistics, by appointment of Governor Ramsey, took up the thread with loyal zeal. At that time a party paper was more effective than it is to-day, and whatever might have been in store for Ramsey in the future, I thoroughly believe he was more indebted for success at that time to the support of the Press, then owned and conducted by Marshall, than any one agency. It was that campaign and alliance between Ramsey and Marshall which founded the Ramsey dynasty, a dynasty which ruled the state for ten years with a rod of iron. The state was small in population and poor in resources, and the governor did not have great patronage to distribute, but a United States senator, in war times, with no civil service impediment, was a very masterful person, and pretty near 57 "monarch of all he surveyed," within the boundary lines of Minnesota.

There was a very formidable element in the Republican party opposed to electing Ramsey to the senate, so formidable that, on the 3d of November, 1862, just two months before the meeting of the legislature, a daily paper was started in St. Paul to voice the opposition. The paper was called the Union, and Frederick Driscoll, who had been publishing a weekly paper at Belle Plaine, became publisher. It was not a very brilliant move to start a daily paper to conduct the senatorial fight at that date, as it was only one day before the election which chose the legislature, and whatever the Press had accomplished in behalf of Ramsey had largely been done in the campaign before the people. But matters were at fever heat, and Marshall's steadfast support of Ramsey bore fruit in the starting of the new paper to supplant him.

Library of Congress

The anti-Ramsey men had selected Hon. Cyrus Aldrich of Minneapolis, then member of Congress, as their candidate, and, of course, he was violently assailed by the Press and the Ramsey interest. So violent did this become that Aldrich brought a big libel suit against the Press, which was finally adjusted by a very profuse apology and explanation. The Press could afford to apologize—after election, and it did.

The legislature met on the 6th of January, 1863, with 46 Republicans and 17 Democrats on joint ballot. In those days there was no separate voting for senators by the respective houses, but the legislature plunged into the election in joint convention, "sight unseen," save as the caucus might have developed. There have been stronger contests, numerically, in later years, but none have exceeded in intensity the fight between Ramsey and Aldrich. There was then a commissioner of Indian affairs at St. Paul, to whom various Indian agents were tributary; there were army and mail contracts; there was government pine almost *ad libitum*, and, in fact, all the necessary adjuncts to make a United States senator very valuable to his friends. I do not assert that sordid motives actuated the supporters of either Ramsey or Aldrich, but mention, as part of the history of that date, some of the things lying around loose that a senator could pick up and hand to his friends, if he had a spark of gratitude and reciprocity in his nature.

58

The Republicans held their first caucus on the evening of January 12th, and the six days during which the legislature had been in session had been exceedingly lively. After the usual elocutionary pyrotechnics, the candidates got their start, and the first ballot stood: Ramsey 19, Aldrich 14, Cooper 7, scattering 5. The next ballot Ramsey gained 1, coming up to 20, and for 19 ballots that was his limit, while Aldrich's 14 stood shoulder to shoulder for the same length of time. Then the Aldrich men began to cast about for a stronger man, and his vote began to decline in favor of James Smith, Jr., of St. Paul. The balloting was continued until nearly midnight, and, on the 24th and last ballot for that night, the vote stood: Ramsey 23, Smith 16, Aldrich 4, scattering 3. Then there was an adjournment

Library of Congress

for jubilation on the one hand and the drowning of grief on the other. Marshall's name figured in the "scattering," he having 1 vote on the first ballot, and then ran up to 4 on the fifth ballot, but his candidacy was never seriously considered, as he was such a stalwart supporter of Ramsey.

The next night, the 13th, the caucus made short work. The first ballot stood: Ramsey 26, James Smith, Jr., 20, and Ramsey was as good as senator. The election took place in joint session on the 14th, Ramsey having 45 (one Republican being sick) and Judge A. G. Chatfield (Dem.) 17 votes.

Following the announcement of the vote in the joint convention, what now seems decidedly amusing occurred. A committee of three was named to wait on Governor Ramsey in his office, on the floor below, and inform him of his election. In the more modern day the committee would have produced the senator-elect bodily before the joint convention. Instead of that Governor Ramsey made his acceptance speech to the committee of three. The Press, next morning, said in its report:

To the committee who waited upon Gov. Ramsey to inform him of his election he made a neat little speech, expressing his thanks for the honor conferred upon him.

And then the committee (it being before the era of phonographs) returned to the joint convention and repeated what it could remember, as witness the following report in the same paper:

59

Mr. Sprague, from the committee, reported that they had waited on Mr. Ramsey and he desired the committee to say that he was grateful for the honor conferred, and would endeavor to discharge the duties of the office with fidelity and to the best of his ability.

The joint convention, which had been sitting, sucking its thumbs, while Governor Ramsey was making his speech at the committee of three, drew a long breath of relief, and

Library of Congress

immediately adjourned. They had evidently remained in session, not expecting a speech, but for fear Governor Ramsey might decline, and they would be compelled to begin over again.

But he didn't.

Of course, Mr. Driscoll's new paper, "The Union," was overwhelmed with gloom when Ramsey was elected. The Press had the state printing, then worth about \$20,000 per annum. It would have been natural to suppose that it would be easier to win the printing than a senatorship, but it was not. The fight had shown that two Republican papers were a party nuisance. Mr. Driscoll was accordingly elected state printer, with the deliberate intention of forcing the Union and Press to consolidate. Each paper had won and lost. The party managers immediately set their wits to work to bring the two papers together. Governor Marshall had for a partner in the Press a gentleman named Newton Bradley. He was in the business office, and in no sense a politician.

He thought he was hopelessly ruined when the Press lost the printing, and was extremely anxious to sell his half interest.

Mr. Driscoll was equally anxious to buy if he could raise the necessary money. In Bradley's desire to get out from under the calamity, he was willing to sell for \$2,000. Mr. Wheelock, however, had shown much dislike to Mr. Driscoll, and with a great deal of emphasis he went at Mr. Bradley and told him to ask \$4,000 for his half interest. At this time it should be borne in mind that Mr. Wheelock was not pecuniarily interested in the Press, though he was its editor, Marshall and Bradley being the owners. Wheelock thought \$4,000 was a larger sum than Driscoll could raise, and, while he did not want to be an absolute stumbling block, he wanted to make it so that the onus of the 60 failure of the consolidation would rest upon Driscoll rather than himself. With great fear and trembling Bradley nerved himself up to ask Driscoll what then seemed the stupendous sum of \$4,000 for a half interest in the Press. Driscoll had more wheels and resources than

Library of Congress

Wheelock had given him credit for, and when he laid the matter before his friends, they promptly supplied the money, and the result was that the Union went out of existence, and Mr. Driscoll came in as half owner of the Press. Albeit the personal relations between himself and Mr. Wheelock were very far from cordial, and for many months they rarely spoke to each other. Later a better understanding arose, and Mr. Wheelock gradually purchased Governor Marshall's entire interest in the Press. Still, the consolidation had saved the party; and out of my personal regard for the "grand old party" at that time, as I was employed on the Union, I consolidated too—and the country was safe.

61

OBSERVATION TEN.

The Failure of Senator Wilkinson to Secure a Re-election in 1865, and the Election of D. S. Norton.

Many curious things have happened in Minnesota politics. I think no other state ever had a legislative party caucus to nominate a United States senator with two senatorial candidates, members of the same branch of the legislature, sitting in the caucus. This occurred in January, 1865, when Daniel S. Norton of Winona and Henry A. Swift of St. Peter were both members of the state senate and both candidates for the United States senate in the Republican nominating convention.

Senator Morton S. Wilkinson of Mankato was the leading candidate, he being the sitting senator, while Windom, Swift and Norton made the field against him. Like everyone who has held a similar position, Senator Wilkinson had given offense in the distribution of patronage, and that was the chief secret of the opposition to him. No one could question his party loyalty or zeal. He ranked with Ben Wade of Ohio and Charles Sumner of Massachusetts in his extreme anti-slavery sentiments, and expressed his views with the vigor of Wade rather than the polish of Summer. His admiration and support of Lincoln was unstinted, and he was one of the few senators with whom Lincoln was wont to consult

Library of Congress

before adopting some radically aggressive policy. Mr. Lincoln did not conceal his desire for Mr. Wilkinson's re-election, and letters showing this were a prominent feature of Wilkinson's campaign. In those days the senate was not as liberal in furnishing clerks and private secretaries for the senators as at present, and Mr. Wilkinson lacked the element of a successful politician as a correspondent with his constituency. Letter writing to him was drudgery, and, while he would attend to important letters, hundreds of trivial ones, such as every senator and congressman receive, went unanswered. Thus, between failure to devote his entire time to writing letters, to the neglect of his real senatorial duties, and his disappointing fifty men for every appointment he made, Wilkinson went down in defeat, notwithstanding he had the direct request from Abraham Lincoln for his re-election.

The legislative caucus to nominate a candidate for the United States senate was called to meet on the evening of the 9th of January, 1865. In the campaign of 1864 a good many Democrats had refused to support McClellan on the "war is a failure" plank, and hence the Republicans were very tender with their partisanship. The call was headed "Union caucus," and invited all those who supported "the Baltimore platform" to participate. This platform was the one on which Lincoln was elected for his second term, and was used as a smooth way of recognizing every one as a Republican who voted for Lincoln. There were forty-nine who attended the caucus, among them being State Senators Swift and Norton. Swift was a merely passive candidate, while Norton was active and aggressive.

When I say that Swift was "in the hands of his friends," I do not mean in the common acceptance of that expression, which is nowadays used as a cover for an active candidacy. Having literally been boys together, growing up in the same town, I can testify that he was one man who had a United States senatorship in his grasp, but declined to lift his hand to obtain it. His friends insisted on his being a candidate, and he allowed them to use his name, because he was a man who loved his friends and felt that he must gratify their wishes. When Ramsey was transferred from the gubernatorial office to the senate and Lieutenant Governor Donnelly was elected to Congress, Henry A. Swift of St. Peter was a member of the state senate and president pro tem. The extraordinary circumstance

Library of Congress

of the governor's and lieutenant governor's positions becoming vacant at the same time brought Swift with one bound from the state senate to the governorship of the state. He made a most acceptable executive, and could have had unanimous nomination from his party for governor (which was equivalent to an election), but he persistently declined. He was compelled to serve for eighteen 63 months before a successor could be chosen, and he repeatedly told me during that time that he longed for the quiet and comfort of his St. Peter home and abominated political positions. No more domestic man ever lived, and, though St. Peter could only be reached by stage from St. Paul, was without telegraph and other modern conveniences, it was "home" and the alpha and omega of life for Governor Swift. In spite of all this, he was again elected to the state senate after being governor. I walked with him from his hotel to the capitol the night of the caucus, and, as we parted, he said with much earnestness: "If I come out of the caucus defeated, I shall be perfectly happy. My friends would have considered it unfair to them if I refused the use of my name, but I do not want it." It was conceded at the time that if Governor Swift had made the slightest effort for himself he would have been an easy winner.

The caucus which followed was prolonged and exciting. It was held with closed doors, lasting until after midnight, a nomination being reached on the thirty-second ballot. With 49 present, 25 was necessary for a choice. The first ballot stood: Wilkinson 16, Swift 11, Windom 10, Norton 12. It is notable that it was "Windom 10" even at that early day. The second ballot stood: Wilkinson 19, Swift 8, Windom 12, Norton 10. Wilkinson's friends stood very loyal, while "the field" was decidedly mixed and demoralized on everything but opposition to Wilkinson. In fact, that was the only way "the field" could hold together. The opposition to Wilkinson had caucused privately and pledged themselves on the one point, not to vote for "Wilk." Then each one could take his chances on combining "the field," the only secure thing in the game being Wilkinson's defeat. For seven ballots he had 20 votes, seven more 22, and still seven more 23, which only lacked two of a nomination. It is not often that a combination will hold together when the opponent so nearly reaches success, while "the field" is so badly divided; but this was one of the times when all political rules

Library of Congress

failed and the combination won. On the thirty-second and last ballot Wilkinson still had 21—within two votes of the highest point he had reached.

When radicals like Senator Ben Wade of Ohio and Henry Winter Davis of Maryland had hampered and worried Lincoln 64 because he did not move rapidly enough in abolishing slavery, Wilkinson had stood by Lincoln and was frequently summoned to the White House for consultation. Lincoln was very anxious for Wilkinson's re-election, and wrote a personal letter urging Minnesota to return him, but that combination would not have listened to a request from God Almighty that night. And this, too, is politics.

The ups and downs of Norton were most remarkable, and if he had not been a member of the caucus he would not have kept in the race half a dozen ballots. He had just three positive friends besides himself. One of these was Senator Dan Cameron of Houston county, but I do not now recall the other two. Norton started with 12 votes, dropped to 10 on the second ballot and went down, down until the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth ballots, when he only had four votes, and one of them was his own. At this point it was proposed to drop Norton, as he was the lowest on the list. Norton was pale and haggard with anxiety and excitement, and he rushed wildly about, declaring it would be fatal to his future to be dropped at so low an ebb, begging them to raise his vote a little as a personal compliment, bringing it back to about where he started, and then he would withdraw himself. This appeal brought his vote on the twenty-sixth ballot up to seven, and then Norton and Cameron both urged raising it a little higher before he withdrew. The next ballot, the twenty-seventh, he jumped to 11, and, as Wilkinson could not break “the field” in his own favor, Norton was as good as a winner. He did not now propose to withdraw. “The field” knew they could elect as soon as they could agree, and when a man gained seven votes in two ballots, even under the expectation that he would withdraw, it looked too much as if he was the coming man to hold him down. It took five more ballots to give it to Norton, those ballots giving him 14, 17, 19, 24, 27—enough to nominate and two to spare. On that last ballot the vote in detail was: Norton 27, Wilkinson 21, Windom 1.

Library of Congress

During all this time Senator Swift sat quietly without asking a single vote, and smiled when he saw the desperation with which Norton was imploring for votes. He was in the hands of his friends literally and nothing more. He began with 11, and that 65 was his highest vote, though almost for the asking he could have run his vote up to the nominating point.

One incident in that caucus showed the desperation of "the field." Hon. H. M. Rice, once a Democratic senator from Minnesota, had come out for Lincoln and against McClellan in the campaign of 1864. This brought him within the pale of the "Union caucus," though he never professed to be a Republican. Hon. John Nicols of St. Paul and subsequent Gov. John S. Pillsbury of Minneapolis were members of that caucus, and during the evening they took a carriage and went to Mr. Rice's residence and urged him to authorize them to announce that he would act with the Republicans in the future, telling him he could be nominated and elected to the senate, but he declined. In spite of this on the twentieth ballot Rice's name was sprung, and he was given 12 votes. For the next five ballots he had 13, but that fatal number ended him, and, after two more ballots, his name disappeared. The next September he was the Democratic nominee for governor.

The senatorial election, in joint session of the legislature, took place on the 11th of January, 1865, two days after the caucus. Norton's vote was not then necessary for his success, and he and two other Republicans being absent, he received 46 votes to 12 for Col. James George, the Democratic nominee.

There is also a history in connection with Norton's election to the state senate, in 1863, which is worthy of preservation.

Norton resided at Winona and was a candidate before the Republican convention for state senator. Thomas Simpson defeated him for the nomination in the interest of Windom. Simpson was a life-long friend of Windom's and the administrator of his estate after his death. Norton bolted the Republican ticket and joined with the Democrats sufficiently

Library of Congress

to defeat Simpson at the polls. Mr. Sinclair, the editor of the Winona Republican, ably supported Norton in his bolt.

At that time the St. Paul Press was recognized as the leading Republican organ of the state. Governor Marshall was still part proprietor, but Mr. Wheelock was editor and Mr. Driscoll business manager. In an unguarded moment both Wheelock and Driscoll went East for a considerable absence, and left the entire editorial conduct of the paper in my charge. As a champion of "straight politics," I made the Press sharply condemn Norton and cordially support Simpson. This led to a controversy between the Press and the Winona Republican, which grew quite bitter and personal, Norton as well being scored as a bolter. When Mr. Wheelock returned the paper was too far committed to change front, and the war on Norton was continued until the polls closed. I never inquired and was never told whether my course suited the proprietors of the paper, but always congratulated myself that they were absent a sufficient length of time to prevent the usual explanation that "if the article had met the eye of the responsible editor it would not have appeared." There had been too many articles to escape in that manner.

The success of Norton at the polls carried great consternation to the ranks of the politicians. It was an endorsement of party treachery which boded no good. The Press felt especially sore, as his election was a direct rebuke to the able arguments for party loyalty which I had the honor of emblazoning in cold print. It was really the first kick over the traces since the Republican party had come into power in Minnesota.

Mr. Norton was an avowed candidate for the United States senate from the start, and, though a bolter from the party, he could not be shut out of the caucus which nominated the senator. It was called as a "Union caucus," the word Republican being entirely omitted, and invited all who endorsed the Baltimore platform, on which Lincoln was elected the second time, to come in. Of course, that included Norton. The Press, by its antagonism to him, was in a dilemma. It would be almost fatal to allow him to reach the United States senate, so far as the prestige of the paper was concerned. Personally, Mr. Wheelock

Library of Congress

avored Governor Swift for senator, and Mr. Driscoll favored Windom. Wheelock and Driscoll had not been partners a great while, and were not sufficiently well acquainted to speak to each other very often but they seemed to recognize their divided personality 67 at this crisis. Consequently, the paper did not directly support any one for the United States senate, but continued the opposition to Norton which had been so auspiciously inaugurated, as I have described. It would be cruel to depict the woe which prevailed in the Press office when Norton actually won in the legislature, and I draw the veil. The Press was not as influential as it thought it was.

It was not long after Andrew Johnson succeeded to the presidency, upon the assassination of Lincoln, before he began to show signs of breaking with his party, and a little later he was in full revolt. Here Norton saw, or thought he saw, his opportunity. Senator Ramsey and the members of the house from Minnesota were bitter against Johnson. Johnson was notoriously exchanging patronage for support, and, to Norton's vision, his becoming a supporter of the president would enable him to dispense all the patronage of Minnesota. He accordingly Andy Johnsonized as a full-fledged Democrat. This took a great political load from the Press, and it "considered itself endorsed" for its opposition to Norton.

Johnson placed the Minnesota offices at Norton's disposal, and he promptly selected Democrats to fill them. They were duly appointed, but the senate refused to confirm, and the Republicans held on. Capt. C. W. Nash was appointed collector of internal revenue, and endeavored to capture the office by force. He succeeded in obtaining possession of the room, but the Republican collector simply moved out and continued business elsewhere. Norton could not get a single friend in place. Congress and cabinet were against Johnson, and by legislation and refusing confirmation tied the president's hands. This was the political ruin of Dan Norton and hastened his death before his term expired. The seed of his destruction was sown by the bolt from his party which the Press condemned.

In 1868 the house prepared articles of impeachment against President Johnson, and in May of that year the senate voted on the subject. It required two-thirds to impeach, and the effort failed. Seven Republicans—Fessenden of Maine, Fowler of Tennessee, Grimes of Iowa, Henderson of Missouri, Trumbull of Illinois, Ross of Kansas and Van Winkle of West Virginia—voted 68 against impeachment and defeated it. The papers and political almanacs published the names of the Republicans who voted for impeachment in Roman letters and the names of the Democrats voting “no” in italics, while the famous seven, who were accused of betraying their party trust, appeared in capitals. Mr. Norton, though elected by a legislature overwhelmingly Republican, was not regarded as a traitor to his party in his vote against impeachment. He had long since gone over to the Democrats, and his name simply appeared in the impeachment voting list in italics. While anathemas were hurled at the seven, even the Minnesota Republican papers did not criticise Norton then. He conveniently died and appealed to a higher court than Minnesota politicians.

69

OBSERVATION ELEVEN.

The Republican State Convention of 1865, with Marshall, Averill and C. D. Gilfillan as Candidates for Governor.

The Republican state convention of 1865 was one worthy of being recorded, though not as exciting as many which have followed it. The convention was held in Ingersoll hall, St. Paul, Sept. 6, 1865, and was composed of 123 delegates. Besides Marshall the candidates were C. D. Gilfillan of St. Paul, and the late Gen. John T. Averill, also of St. Paul, though for political purposes credited to Lake City, where he formerly resided. Practically, geography did not cut any figure. It was the Ramsey wing of the party supporting Marshall against the field, and the division of the anti-Ramsey forces between Gilfillan and Averill proved Marshall's good fortune. It was a stubborn and bitter contest, the convention remaining in continuous session from 2 p. m. until midnight, repeated motions for adjournment until the next day or for a recess being voted down. The first

Library of Congress

ballot stood: Averill 44, Marshall 40, Gilfillan 39. Sixty-two was necessary for a choice. On the sixth ballot Marshall ran up to 53, and then occurred one of the most remarkable things I have ever noticed in politics. Marshall steadily lost, and on the 15th and 16th ballots only had 38 votes, two less than he began with. By all the rules of politics he should have been defeated after such a steady loss for 10 ballots, but instead he recuperated, and on the 20th ballot he received 52, Averill 53, and the rest went for Gilfillan. On the 22d and last ballot the vote was Marshall 63, Averill 50 and Gilfillan 2.

H. M. Rice was the Democratic nominee for governor, and a very amusing incident of the campaign was a joint debate between the candidates. Neither one was in any sense a public 70 speaker at that time, though Governor Marshall became one later. They were goaded into the debate by their friends, and the bantering of the Pioneer and the Press with each other. The first debate was held at Hastings, and there was the usual argument for the division of time, each candidate having two speeches. The program would have required about three hours to execute, but, though it was a little after 8 o'clock when the meeting began, the exercises entirely concluded by 9 o'clock. Both were very courteous gentlemen, and the burden of each one's speech was his expression of regard for the other as a pioneer settler and the esteem in which he was held by the community. When Marshall had concluded, every one present felt like voting for Mr. Rice, and when Rice had concluded he had stemmed the torrent in favor of himself and turned it in the direction of Marshall. The joint debate so taxed their physical systems that by the time they had reached Wabasha both candidates were too ill to continue, and did not sufficiently recover during the campaign to resume the engagement which had been mapped out for the entire state.

Along in 1860–61 the St. Paul newspapers had much tribulation in securing news. There were three daily morning papers: the Pioneer, published by Earle S. Goodrich; the Press by Governor Marshall, and the Times by the late Major Newson. Mr. Goodrich stole a march on his "esteemed contemporaries" by making an exclusive contract with the single telegraph company for the transmission of the press report. Minneapolis, at that time,

Library of Congress

had no daily paper, but St. Anthony (now Minneapolis East) had two or three. Governor Marshall arranged with the St. Anthony Express to get their telegrams, and about 1 a. m. a messenger would run a John Gilpin race from the express office in St. Anthony to the Press office in St. Paul. Governor Marshall frequently took that night ride, as he was accustomed to rapid transit on horseback. After the perpetration of a great sell on the other papers by the Pioneer, printing in a few copies some bogus telegrams, announcing the death of Queen Victoria, the assassination of the president, etc., the matter became too unbearable. The tradition which has come down in newspaper circles is that Governor Marshall, putting a pistol in his pocket, one 71 afternoon called upon Mr. Goodrich in his office, closed the door, and, taking a seat, politely and calmly, in a moderate tone of voice, informed him that he had come there to kill him. Probably a more determined man never lived in Minnesota than Governor Marshall, and, if the story is true, he evidently had a business air in presenting his verbal communication. Tradition states that the two gentlemen parted the best of friends, and thereafter both the Pioneer and the Press received the telegrams.

While I do not vouch for this story, I have narrated it for another purpose. In the winter of '94 I was preparing a paper for the Editorial Association, on "Early Journalism in Minnesota," and, wishing to have it accurate, I called upon Governor Marshall at his rooms in the Historical Society. Knowing that it was useless to expect him to tell the story, I narrated the tradition as I had heard it, and asked him if it was true. I shall never forget the look of sorrow on his kindly face, as the past was seemingly recalled, when he said:

"Oh, Mr. Hall, don't print that. It would convey the impression that I intimidated Mr. Goodrich. We are the best of friends, and I had a very comforting letter of condolence from him recently. We arranged our newspaper differences very pleasantly, and have been friends ever since."

A somewhat stormy political and varied business life, clouded in the last years by the loss of wife and only child, ended after a protracted illness, far from the scenes of its

Library of Congress

triumphs, reverses and sorrows. The soul of business honor, a gallant and generous political adversary, time had long since softened whatever asperities had existed, and, to use his words I have quoted, he parted with his personal surviving world "the best of friends." The impress of his sterling worth upon the State of Minnesota in her early days will be his lasting monument.

72

OBSERVATION TWELVE.

Windom's First Election to the Senate.

It is not likely that Minnesota will ever again see as harmonious a senatorial election as occurred in January, 1871. In fact, there were two elections, but one was inconsequential in point of service, though it carried the regular salary with it. Daniel S. Norton, the senator elected in 1865, died in July, 1870. His term would have expired the following March. Governor Austin appointed ex-Gov. William Windom of Winona to fill the vacancy, but this appointment only lasted until the legislature could elect. While this put Windom in the line of promotion, it did not necessarily leave him without opposition. The legislature which was elected that fall had in the senate 13 Republicans and 9 Democrats, and in the house 32 Republicans and 15 Democrats, a majority on joint ballot of 19. This made the Republican candidacy for the senate all the more enticing, but the political cards seemed to have been played in Mr. Windom's favor.

The legislature met on the 2d day of January, 1871, but under the congressional law the election for senator could not take place until the 17th. Windom's friends evidently realized that delays were dangerous, and a Republican caucus was accordingly called for the evening of January 5th. An interesting incident of this caucus was the fact that W. D. Washburn of Minneapolis was chairman of the caucus and D. M. Sabin of Stillwater one of the secretaries.

73

Library of Congress

In later years both of these gentlemen reached the senate, Sabin after a sharp fight with Windom, and Washburn after a violent controversy with Sabin. The caucus was less animated than usual. It was decided to nominate two candidates, one to serve until the 4th of March, 1871, and the other to serve six years from the 4th of March, 1871. The nomination was first made for the long term, with 39 of the 45 Republicans in the legislature present, and on an informal ballot Windom received 35 votes, Thomas Wilson of Winona 2, Horace Austin of St. Peter 1, and—1. On the formal ballot Windom had 34, Wilson 3, Austin 1 and—1. The long term, having thus been summarily disposed of, the caucus proceeded to nominate a candidate to hold for six weeks, and for this position Judge O. P. Stearns of Duluth had 27 votes, Gen. James H. Baker of Mankato 9, Wilson 2 and Windom 1. The selection of Stearns for so short a period, however, was simply for the purpose of passing the honors about and preventing any formal opposition to Mr. Windom receiving the full term, for, as a legal proposition, he could as well have been chosen for both. With the single exception of the first nomination of Senator C. K. Davis, no such harmonious senatorial caucus has even been held in the state. While the acceptance speeches of the two nominees were brief, they occupied more time than all the rest of the proceedings of the caucus. During the twelve days' interval between the caucus and the election by the legislature, there were mutterings of trouble, but they did not materialize beyond newspaper talk. On the duly appointed day when the senate met, the thirteen Republicans were in their seats, but not a single Democrat. The Democrats were absent, holding a caucus to determine who should receive the empty honor of their votes. The Republicans thought that such a little matter as the absence of all of the Democrats was of no importance, and immediately after the reading of the journal Hon. John S. Pillsbury arose, and, in a graceful speech, nominated Mr. Windom for the long term. The 13 cast their votes for him, and Mr. Pillsbury again arose and nominated Stearns for the short term, with the same result. The vote was duly recorded in the journal, and the senate then 74 proceeded with its regular order of business, as though nothing had happened. A little later the door opened, and Michael Doran, George L. Becker, L. L. Baxter, J. L. McDonald, Leonard B. Hodge, D. L. Buell, C. F. Buck, W. T. Bonniwell and R. J. Chewning, all the

Library of Congress

names of men prominent in Democratic circles, marched in and took their seats. Business ran along for perhaps half an hour, the Republicans chuckling over the situation, and the nine Democrats awaiting the action of the dominant party in calling up the election. Finally the joke leaked out that the thing was all over; whereupon L. L. Baxter arose and asked to have the privilege of recording his vote, stating that he had been unavoidably absent when the election had taken place. The privilege was granted, but amid much mirth, and he voted for R. A. Jones of Rochester for the long term and E. M. Wilson of Minneapolis for the short term. Some Republican then magnanimously proposed that all the Democrats be allowed to vote, and the remaining eight joined Mr. Baxter; but the original record still stands 13 to 0 in favor of Windom. In the face of this who dare say that 13 is an unlucky number?

The house did not proceed so rapidly with its work. The Democrats belonging to that body had time after their caucus adjourned to reach there before the vote was taken. When the order of business was reached for the election in the house, Representative W. D. Washburn nominated Windom for the long term, and, on the vote being taken, it stood Windom 30, Jones 14, Wilkinson 1, Buck and Wilson of Winona 1 each. One Democrat had declined to vote for Jones, and two Republicans had refused to vote for Windom, but this did not change the result.

For the short term Stearns received 31 votes and E. M. Wilson of Minneapolis 13.

The next day, in joint session, the respective journals were read, and the election was all completed.

The next morning after the election the St. Paul Press declared that Messrs. Thomas Wilson, M. S. Wilkinson and Ignatius Donnelly had formed a combination to defeat Windom, over which he had triumphed, but there was no evidence of such a combination; and I can testify from personal knowledge that it was only a figment of the imagination. Windom had the machinery and the leaders of the party and no opposing

Library of Congress

candidate. What more could have been desired? He was nominated in the senate by Pillsbury, who subsequently served the state as governor for six years, and in the house by Washburn, who subsequently served a term of six years in the senate himself. He was supported by D. M. Sabin, then a state senator, who later became United States senator for six years. He was also supported by John L. Merriam of St. Paul, who was speaker of the house.

As party politics go, he had all of the leaders of the Republican party at that time in his favor, and an act of Providence could not have defeated him unless God had interfered early in the game.

76

OBSERVATION THIRTEEN.

The Congressional Campaign of 1868, when Ignatius Donnelly was Defeated for Congress by the Ramsey Dynasty.

The beginning of the evolution of Ignatius Donnelly from a Republican member of Congress to the position of a private citizen, and thence to the leadership of the People's Party, and to his death a disappointed man, might be said to date from Aug. 1, 1868. It was on the evening of that date that a most remarkable political meeting was held in Ingersoll hall, St. Paul. The late Gen. John T. Averill presided, and Mr. Donnelly spoke until nearly midnight. The burden of his speech was a reply to some charges made against him by E. B. Washburne of Illinois, and repelling assaults of the St. Paul Press, the Republican organ of the state, and thick and thin supporter of Senator Ramsey.

Mr. Donnelly had been in Congress three terms, and was a candidate for the fourth. While he was not an open candidate for the senate, against Ramsey, the Ramseyites feared that he would be in the way if elected for a fourth term to the house. Hence, the Ramsey men decided to kill him off. W. D. Washburn of Minneapolis was one of a distinguished band of brothers, all of whom had been members of Congress, and the position seemed

Library of Congress

to be due him by right of inheritance. The Ramsey hostilities, coupled with Mr. Donnelly's long term, made it look fairly favorable for a new man. Elihu Washburne, brother of W. D., was a member of Congress from Illinois. He wrote a letter to the land department at Washington concerning the Taylors Falls land office, in which he bore down heavily upon Ignatius. After that letter, which Donnelly interpreted to have been written by Elihu to aid his Minneapolis brother in reaching Congress, 77 he donned his war paint. The result was Donnelly's famous anti-Washburn speech in Congress, which was his (Donnelly's) undoing.

Elihu Washburne prided himself upon making a reputation as "the watch dog of the treasury." It was a period when extravagances ran riot, and if the treasury ever needed a watch dog that was the time. It is probably to Elihu's credit to say that he was the most cordially hated man in Congress. He had blocked innumerable schemes which different members had set their hearts on securing, probably many times being right, and doubtless sometimes wrong. When, therefore, it was known that Donnelly, with his keen wit and ready tongue, was going to devote an hour in Congress to flaying Elihu Washburne alive, he had a delighted, applauding and enthusiastic audience. Donnelly's time limit was one hour, and he had loaded himself accordingly. During that hour all went well, and I have always felt that if a merciful Providence had intervened and prevented his speaking longer, his political future, and indeed all his life would have been different. He would unquestionably have reached the senate during his early manhood. Circumstances and antagonisms often change the entire current of a man's life, and they did in Mr. Donnelly's case.

When Mr. Donnelly's hour expired, there were loud plaudits, and enthusiastic cries of "go on," "go on." His time was unanimously extended. I imagine Elihu Washburne was about the only man in Congress who did not enjoy it, and perhaps he did. This extension gave Donnelly more time than he had prepared for, but he arose to the occasion and let himself loose. During that portion of his speech some expressions were uttered which were afterwards severely criticised, and one particular word was especially assailed by

Library of Congress

the Eastern papers for coarseness. This word was capable of a double construction, but, of course, the public gave it the vile interpretation. The result was a reaction against Donnelly, which aided in retiring him to private life and ultimately to a minority.

Mr. Donnelly's first speech in Minnesota, after Congress adjourned, was at the Ingersoll hall meeting I have named, and to say that it was bubbling over with Western enthusiasm is putting it extremely mild. It was overwhelmingly exciting and wildly hilarious from start to finish. Donnelly's excoriations of the Washburn family, and especially of the St. Paul Press, were received with yells and whoops of delight. Times have changed, and it would be impossible to provide conditions for such a meeting at this period of the world. Mr. Wheelock was apparently the only friend of the Press present, and a slight interjection he made, intimating that Donnelly lied, added interest to the occasion. Resolutions were passed not only endorsing Donnelly, but strongly repudiating and denouncing the Press as a party organ. There was not a dissenting vote.

Following this warlike beginning, Donnelly's campaign for a renomination to Congress came on. The district was something enormous, in geographical proportions, as is shown from the fact that it embraced the following counties: Anoka, Benton, Carver, Cass, Chisago, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Lake, Lincoln, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Pope, Ramsey, Stearns, St. Louis, Sherburne, Todd, Wabasha, Washington and Wright.

It was generally accepted that, while the contest on the surface was for the house, it was in reality a contest between Donnelly and Ramsey for the United States senate. If the senatorial question could have been eliminated, Donnelly would have been returned to Congress without opposition, as he was, at that time, recognized as an able party leader. But his senatorial aspirations were regarded as the unpardonable sin in the eyes of the supporters of Ramsey. The young men of the party very largely supported Donnelly, and the older and more experienced politicians were largely on the Ramsey side.

Library of Congress

The state was new, and it was natural that young men, who had come West to begin life for themselves, should be in the ascendant, numerically. The result was that the young men engaged in that campaign with an enthusiasm and fierceness that could never be repeated by them. The smallpox removes a virus from the system which makes a recurrence of the disease impossible. Such a campaign as that of 1868 had a similar political effect upon the youngsters, and never again has blood been at such fever heat in Minnesota as in 1868. It would be absolutely impossible to duplicate the experience. It was a literal display of the old maxim, "Old men for counsel, young men for war." The young men who championed Donnelly's cause had the numbers and the enthusiasm, but the older men who supported Ramsey had the sagacity, experience and discretion, and those qualities more than made up for the lack of numbers.

Ramsey county was the hotbed for both factions, though there was much excitement throughout the district, and particularly in Minneapolis, where Daniel and Joel Basset and the late Dr. Keith were prominent Donnelly supporters. Whatever furore existed elsewhere was mild in comparison with that which prevailed in St. Paul, where Senator Ramsey and Governor Marshall, who was his active supporter, resided. Here, too, were the respective "organs." The St. Paul Press was an ardent supporter of Ramsey, and the St. Paul Dispatch equally ardent for Donnelly. I had started the Dispatch in February, 1868, and, while it was launched to be a legitimate and permanent newspaper, I was personally strongly in favor of Donnelly, and nothing loth to have that faction of the party advance the interests of the paper by business support.

It would be wearisome to trace the campaign in detail, though it was mighty interesting at the time, but it was protracted for months, and more bitter than any political contest before or since in the state. It was young, impetuous blood against cool, calculating cunning, and, as usual, the latter won. The beginning of the culmination was the Ramsey county convention to select delegates to the district convention. The county committee was in the hands of the Ramsey faction, with the late George W. Moore, collector of the port, as

Library of Congress

chairman. The district convention had been called for September 3d, and the Donnelly men were so confident of success that they were anxious for an early county convention for its effect on the rest of the district. The county committee were too smart to allow this game to be played, and called the county convention for August 29th, only five days before the district convention—too late for the result to have any moral effect upon the other portions of the district. The primary meetings to select delegates to the county convention were called for the evening of August 27th.

80

It is no exaggeration to say that no such primaries have ever been seen in St. Paul as those which were held on that memorable evening. There was excitement all over the city, but the greatest existed in the First and Second wards. In the First ward the late Governor Marshall led the Ramsey forces, and the late C. P. Barnard the Donnelly forces. The primary was held in a vacant store on the lower floor of the old International Hotel, on the corner of Seventh and Jackson streets. One of the interesting episodes was the giving way of the floor, precipitating a good many into the cellar. Quite a number discovered, the next day, that they were hurt, but not a man, on either side, flinched that night. As soon as they could pick themselves out of the cellar they resumed the fight as though nothing had happened. Barnard went down with the crowd, but Marshall escaped. Barnard, himself, did not know for 24 hours that he was quite seriously injured. A physical contest was narrowly averted, and the Press said next day that no respect was paid the governor and that he was grossly insulted. I have no doubt that this was eminently true. There was no standing on politeness or formalities that night.

My own station was at the Second ward, where the primaries were held on the second floor of the old tumble-down court house, which occupied the site of the present court house and city hall. We knew that there would be a double-headed delegation to the county convention, and sought to have “regularity” on our side. In those days the political parties used, at the primaries, the ballot boxes actually in service on election day. In order to be “regular,” the Second ward box was obtained from the Democratic sheriff, who was

Library of Congress

the custodian, and carried to the Dispatch office early in the day. Half an hour before the primaries were to open 10 or 15 stalwart supporters of Donnelly gathered at the Dispatch office, and, forming a hollow square about the bearer of the "palladium of our liberties," which was myself, escorted the box to the court house to guard against its being seized by the opposition.

The country committee had selected the judges of election for every primary, and in every case gave two out of the three to the Ramsey faction; or, as it was termed at the time, the 81 Washburn men, as he was the candidate for the nomination against Donnelly. Of course, the Donnelly men rebelled, and insisted on electing the judges by popular vote at the opening of the meeting. The committee had selected for the Second ward Capt. Russell Blakely and Theodore Sander, Washburn men, and Sherwood Hough, clerk of the supreme court, a Donnelly man, for judges. The Donnelly men proceeded to elect the judges viva voce, selecting both Hough and Sander, omitting Blakely, and with the sacred "regular" ballot box opened the "regular poll" in the center of the room, while Captain Blakely and Sander went to one side of the room and opened a poll in the captain's hat. Sander declined to recognize his selection by the Donnellyites. The Donnelly forces formed a solid cordon of men from the door to the "regular box," with a view of preventing anyone who desired to reach Captain Blakely's hat from doing so, and no one got through that line, to go to the side ballot hat, without a scrimmage. Dr. W. A. Bentley, now a prominent physician of Bismarck, N. D., and one time mayor of that city, and myself mounted chairs and relieved each other in yelling to the incomers that the "regular poll is in the center of the room." We watched our opponents, and whenever Captain Blakely, or any of his associates, who were also mounted on chairs, opened their mouths and attempted to invite the voters to come over to the hat, their voices were instantly drowned by our yells, the entire Donnelly crowd ably seconding our lung efforts. It is no exaggeration to say that not one of their announcements was heard that evening by anyone but the men who uttered them, and I doubt whether they caught their own words some of the time.

Library of Congress

The Pioneer (then a Democratic paper) of the next day gave this description of the scene, which was really an impartial account from political opponents, and I accordingly quote it, rather than further describe an event in which I was somewhat of a participant:

[St. Paul Pioneer, Aug. 28, 1868.]

The Donnelly men had secured the regular voting box, and Capt. Blakely was accordingly reduced to the necessity of using his soft white hat to receive votes in. The Donnellyites were at the desk in the center 6 82 of the room and Capt. Blakely at the left of the Donnelly men. In front of the box where the latter were voting, Mr. Hall and Mr. Bentley placed themselves on benches, and during the entire evening made short speeches to the swaying, excited crowd that stood before them. Hugo Petzhold, seeing his friend Blakely in a tight place, hopped up onto a seat and attempted to help him. The first note of his melodious voice had scarcely escaped from beneath his moustache and begun to float upon the balmy air, before Hall's lungs returned a sound that completely swallowed up poor Petzhold's whistle. The song sung by Mr. Hall was, "The regular organized poll is in the center of the room, come up here and vote. Petzhold stopped, and, as soon as his opponent ended, he commenced again, but no sooner was the first sound heard than the same song was repeated by Hall in thunder tones. So this continued throughout the whole evening. Every time Blakely's crowd attempted to say anything they were sure to be drowned out. Capt. Blakely stood on a chair, occasionally attempting to speak, and all the time rubbing his hands. The lights burned dim, the crowd was boisterous, Blakely and Petzhold, sad and mad, the Donnelly men voting like devils, and the corners of the room filled with jolly Democrats, Blakely and Petzhold again and again attempted to say something, but, heavens and earth, what a yell went up from the Donnellyites. The most common expression heard at this time among the spectators was "This is hell."

As near as I can remember, after a lapse of over 30 years, it was H—.

Library of Congress

It was the well conceived plan of the Ramsey-Washburn men to force double primaries by the selection of judges which they knew the Donnellyites would not accept, and the scheme worked. Each of the five wards in the city had five delegates, four of the county towns two each, and the remaining two towns one each, making the whole county convention number 35. After the caucuses the Donnelly leaders gathered at the Dispatch office and before midnight we had reports showing that every ward and every town, except Mounds View, had held double primaries. Mounds View had just one delegate, and whichever side obtained that would have one majority in the county convention and could throw the other side out entirely. There was a painful silence from Mounds View. A carriage and driver was quickly obtained, and W. L. Wilson, afterwards Governor Davis' private secretary, was posted off for a night ride. He returned in the morning with duly executed credentials for a Donnelly delegate, and the Donnelly forces were happy. The same morning the late Governor 83 Marshall went out to Mounds View and returned with duly executed credentials for a Washburn delegate. Then the convention stood 35 to 35, and there was grief.

I think, if the truth was known, it would be found that neither side held a primary at Mounds View, and it was only a question of making out the credentials to secure the delegates. And on this turn of a hair the political life or death of a good many people was determined.

Of course, under these circumstances there was nothing to do but carry the war into the county and district convention. The result was when the Republican county convention met in St. Paul, Aug. 29, 1868, to name delegates to the congressional district convention, there were two of them. The Donnelly and the Ramsey-Washburn factions each appeared with 35 delegates, the full number to which the convention was entitled. It was not the intention of either side to harmonize, simply because it was an impossibility. With the seat of every delegate in the convention contested, who was there left to decide in the premises? The convention was called in the same old court house where the Second ward caucus was held, and the only semblance of regularity contested for between the

Library of Congress

factions was to meet at the place specified in the call. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to have both factions present, and, as each had a full hand, it simply resulted in two conventions meeting at the same time in the same room.

In speaking of the affair the next day the St. Paul Press (Ramsey organ) said:

“As soon as the door of the court house was unfastened a mob rushed in along with the regularly elected delegates.”

That statement is correct, and from the moment the crowd entered until the retirement of the Ramsey-Washburn forces, bedlam reigned. It would, in fact, bear a stronger expletive. There was not the slightest attempt to preserve order on the part of anyone, but both sides simply yelled to the extent of their ability. The Donnelly forces yelled the loudest, because there were more of them and they were younger men. William Branch was selected as chairman for the Donnelly forces, and Dr. David Day, afterwards postmaster, filled that position for the Ramsey- 84 Washburn faction. Branch and Day sat side by side on the judge's bench, and just below them, in the clerk's desk, sat the respective secretaries. I do not believe a single motion made that day was heard by anyone. The yelling was simply incessant. After vain attempts to make motions, to be put by the opposing chairmen, both sides, by common consent, seemed to abandon the effort. But the yelling went right along just the same. Motions were put in writing and handed to the chair, and if they met his approval he leaned over his desk and handed them to the secretary of his faction, telling him to record them as carried. To add to the pleasure of the event, the floor settled about three inches. If the applause and excitement had been expressed by the stamping of feet instead of by noisy yells, I have no doubt the floor would have gone down with the crowd. A good many spectators were too much alarmed to take any chances and left the hall.

When the secretaries had duly recorded their work, it was found that the Donnelly men had selected James Smith, Jr., Albert Edgerton, H. J. Brainerd, T. Metcalf, C. H. Schurmeier and W. L. Banning as their delegates to the district convention. The Ramsey-

Library of Congress

Washburn crowd came up smiling with Russell Blakely, G. A. Nash, J. C. Becht, C. K. Davis, David Day and F. A. Renz as their delegates. Perhaps, owing to the sinking of the floor, and perhaps owing to physical exhaustion, the Ramsey crowd retired first. The Donnelly forces had done all of their business, but, with the coast clear, a love-feast ratification meeting was held, and some violent speeches made. It was evident from the result in Ramsey county that there was to be no peace at the district convention.

The district convention, which was due to have 89 delegates, was merely another struggle to get two nominees for Congress before the public in such a manner that each could claim to be the "regular" nominee. The convention was called to meet in Ingersoll hall, St. Paul, on Sept. 3, 1868. The chairman of the district committee was an ardent Donnelly man, but the majority of the committee were anti-Donnelly. The day before the convention the committee met with T. M. Metcalf, chairman, of St. Paul, A. B. Stickney of Stillwater (now president of the Chicago & Great Western), E. W. Cutter of Minneapolis, and F. Foss, proxy for S. J. Willard, present. The majority of the committee elected Mr. Stickney (a Washburn man) secretary, and then prepared to issue tickets to the delegates signed by the chairman and countersigned by the secretary. The formal plan of the anti-Donnelly portion of the committee was signed by all the members of the committee present except Metcalf, and given to the public thus:

That in case any credentials shall be presented to said committee which any one of said committee shall believe to be fraudulent, it shall be the duty of said committee before issuing tickets to such delegates to require satisfactory evidence that said delegates were elected by a convention held in pursuance of a published call, and that no person shall be admitted to the floor of said hall on said day prior to 11 a. m., and then only such persons as shall be the holders of tickets signed by both the chairman and secretary of the committee.

Library of Congress

Another paragraph in the published fulmination provided for placing the custody of the hall in the hands of the chief of police, who was to be the only man having the key, and he was to keep the hall closed until 11 a. m., and aid in seeing that only proper persons entered.

While Metcalf, the Donnelly chairman, would not assent to this program, and it was printed without his signature, it was sharp, though high-handed tactics. It made the district committee absolutely judges of who were legitimate delegates and brought the police force of the city to their aid in an ingenious manner. The late Dr. J. H. Stewart was mayor, and he was a Ramsey man, as was his chief of police, J. P. McIlrath. Of course, there was nothing for the rest of the police force but to do or die. Chief McIlrath was cousin of Charles McIlrath, the then state auditor, who was in the Ramsey circle, and this made another tie that bound.

Chairman Metcalf issued a proclamation all by himself as an antidote, stating that he would issue tickets, signed by himself, to all claiming to be delegates, regardless of contests. And he did. Then the anti-Donnelly delegates, contestants and all, took their tickets with Metcalf's signature to Secretary Stickney, and he signed them also, but the Donnelly delegates would not ask for the secretary's name. Thus the morning of the 3d of September dawned with all of the groundwork well laid by the anti-Donnelly men, to win by strategy.

The Donnelly forces gathered in Armory hall, a block farther down Third street than Ingersoll hall. At 11 a. m. they formed in marching line, two by two, and with W. L. Banning and Henry Acker of St. Paul, and Gen. William Le Duc of Hastings, at their head, marched to Ingersoll hall. The street in front of the hall was literally packed with an excited multitude, the Donnelly portion, at least, wrought up to the pitch of a physical contest. George W. Moore had been selected by the anti-Donnelly portion of the district committee to inspect the tickets of the delegates, with instructions to admit only those who had tickets signed by both Metcalf and Stickney. Moore stood at the foot of the first flight of stairs, on a level with the sidewalk. The hall was up two flights. In a room at the top of the first flight

Library of Congress

Chief McIlrath and a posse of police were ensconced to come to the rescue, if George Moore did not stop the crowd at the foot of the stairway. The three Donnelly leaders named marched up to George Moore and demanded admittance, shaking their tickets under his nose, which he refused, because Secretary Stickney had not signed their tickets. Stickney had been given no opportunity to sign or refuse to sign. A wordy altercation ensued, and then they turned and marched back to Armory hall, the others following.

That was a fatal mistake on the part of the Donnelly forces. They were numerically strong enough to have entered the hall, and I never believed the police would have fought. At all events, I know the Donnelly forces were ready to test the question, and were armed to enforce the contest. I carried a self-cocking revolver in my pocket, and believe I was so foolishly excited that I would have used it if a Ramsey man had struck me. I was spoiling to be hurt that day. The late Gen. John T. Averill passed the briareus at the foot of the stairs and went up to the hall and I did the same. I found Ossian E. Dodge, a Donnelly man, at the top of the first flight of stairs, and we joined in yelling to Banning and his crowd to "come on," but they did not "come." The police were right at our elbows, but did not offer to molest or rebuke us, and did not interfere with General Averill's going up the second flight into the sacred hall. General Averill was very prominent as a Donnelly man, and had no ticket whatever. I learned afterwards, to my chagrin, that Mr. Donnelly and a few of his leading friends had conferred at Armory hall and decided that it would be unwise to go farther than make the demand for admittance. They designed to do just what they did do, "march up the hill and then march down again." If they had fought their way into the hall, as they could, the trend of politics in the state for the last quarter of a century would have been different. The chances for a fight and the political opportunities of a lifetime vanished together.

A DEMOCRAT WINS.

How the late Eugene M. Wilson of Minneapolis, a Democrat, happened to be sent to Congress from the Third Minnesota district, in 1868, when the district was overwhelmingly

Library of Congress

Republican, is an interesting chapter in the politics of the state. I have already recounted the attempt of the Donnelly forces to enter Ingersoll hall, in St. Paul, where the district convention was called to meet, and their failure to gain admission. The Donnellyites after that discomfiture retired to Armory hall, and had a most harmonious and enthusiastic convention. Mr. Donnelly was nominated by acclamation, and the national Republican ticket of Grant and Colfax was endorsed especially strong, in order to show party loyalty, and thus make amends for any irregularity in congressional matters.

There was the same effort in Armory hall convention to prove the other side bolters which had pervaded the preliminary primary meetings and county conventions. To accomplish this end the Donnelly convention formulated a proposition and sent it to the Ingersoll hall congregation. That proposition was to have both conventions adjourn without making any nominations, and on the first Tuesday in October hold a semi-election throughout the district to select a nominee. Polls were to be opened as upon election day, but the voting was to be confined to the Republicans. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes was to be accepted by both factions as the nominee, and 88 the name placed upon the regular ticket at the November election. This was a primary election law in embryo. There was really no expectation that this offer would be accepted, and it was merely sparring for "regularity." When the committee with this offer reached Ingersoll hall the convention had taken a recess, and the document was left with the secretary. In the afternoon, when the Ingersoll hall convention reassembled, the proposition from the Armory hall affair was promptly refused, and instead resolutions were passed inviting the Donnellyites to come to Ingersoll hall and submit their claims to seats. When the committee to present these resolutions reached Armory hall, between 3 and 4 p. m., that gathering had completed its work and had adjourned sine die. This ended all convention negotiations, and each side went vigorously to work to prove the other bolters. That was a heinous offense in those days, and both factions sought to escape the odium.

The anti-Donnelly convention at Ingersoll hall was just as determined as the other one, but their proceedings were not nearly as cheerful. The counties of Benton, Carver, Crow

Library of Congress

Wing, Dakota, Morrison, St. Louis, Wabasha, Washington and Wright were unrepresented. These were not contested counties and were entitled to seats, but they were for Donnelly and would not appear. In the Donnelly convention McLeod, Pope and Sherburne were the only counties not represented. Truth of history, however, compels the statement that the Hennepin delegation, 12 in number, in the Donnelly convention, was not legitimate. Washburn had secured the Hennepin delegation without opposition, and a resolution had been passed instructing the delegates to present his name to the district convention. The delegates were J. S. Pillsbury, Levi Butler, J. H. Thompson, A. R. Hall, G. F. Townsend, A. Ortman, E. B. Ames, G. M. Stickney, L. Fletcher, C. H. Petit, F. R. E. Cornell and W. A. Stanchfield. The Donnelly delegation might be termed a "private snap," and this had a good deal to do with the split in the district convention. This is what the anti-Donnelly men of the district committee meant when, in their pronunciamiento, they announced that before issuing tickets of admission to Ingersoll hall they must have "satisfactory evidence that said delegates were elected by a 89 convention held in pursuance of a published call." This rule the Donnelly delegates could not comply with so far as Hennepin county was concerned, and if there had been but one convention the Washburn delegation, I have named, would have been very properly admitted in spite of any contest. The supporters of Donnelly in Minneapolis claimed foul play, but they let Washburn, in the final round-up, take the delegation without a protest, and had no ground on which to rest a contest at the convention on September 3d.

A full district convention would have been 89. At Ingersoll hall there were 59 present and at Armory hall 62, but in both conventions there were some who were not legitimate, and the real, honestly elected delegates would have shown still more favorably to Donnelly. W. D. Washburn of Minneapolis, Gen. L. F. Hubbard of Red Wing and Gen. C. C. Andrews of St. Cloud were named as candidates. The first ballot stood: Washburn 31, Hubbard 15, Andrews 13. Washburn would have been nominated on the next ballot, but he was shrewd enough to see that with the split in the party he could not be elected, and he accordingly withdrew. General Hubbard was then easily chosen. He made a short acceptance

Library of Congress

speech, and at the conclusion the gallery gave three rousing cheers for Donnelly, while the convention cheered for Hubbard. General Hubbard changed his mind early in the canvass and positively withdrew his name. Then the Donnellyites took heart of hope. They saw victory in the air and fairly hugged themselves with joy, only to have their bright anticipations nipped in the bud. The Ingersoll hall district committee, with much effort, secured the consent of General Andrews to accept their nomination, fully understanding he would be defeated. General Andrews showed good business judgment, as he insisted on a purse of \$7,500 being placed in his hands for campaign expenses before he would make the race. Between the two Republican candidates Eugene Wilson (Democrat) was elected by 2,241 plurality over Donnelly and 4,908 over Andrews.

This defeat and what grew out of it, resulted in Mr. Donnelly's permanent retirement from the Republican party, and was the making of General Andrews' political, perhaps, I might say, 90 personal, fortune. E. B. Washburne became secretary of state under Grant, and he made Andrews minister to Sweden, a \$12,000 "and outfit" position. Andrews held this for 12 years, and later was made consul at Rio Janeiro, which he held four years.

The result at the polls showed that the "youngsters" in Ramsey county were overwhelmingly in the majority, and really carried Ramsey county at the primaries, but were outgeneraled by the "old heads." The Republican vote in Ramsey county was 400 for Andrews to 2,200 for Donnelly.

The Democrats gathered the harvest by electing the late Eugene M. Wilson of Minneapolis, the vote standing: Donnelly 11,229, Andrews 8,595, Wilson 13,506. In St. Paul the supporters of Mr. Donnelly were the young, active Republicans, and they were so overwhelmingly in the majority that they could not realize that people "up north" in Norseland would not hesitate to vote for Andrews. The favorite bet in St. Paul was that Donnelly would poll two votes to Andrews' one in the district. In St. Paul it was nearly four to one, and the boys were influenced by their local surroundings. The result was a wailing and gnashing of teeth. Mr. Driscoll of the Press was sufficiently shrewd to do up

Library of Congress

the Donnelly crowd sadly. He did not make any personal or open bets, but through others, notably E. G. Rogers, now clerk of the courts in Ramsey county, he accommodated the boys to their hearts' content. At least it was sufficient after it was over. But, oh, the gall and wormwood of the Donnelly crowd, to think that they had not only lost their money, but that it had gone to one of the proprietors of the paper which had so bitterly opposed them. If, perchance, the Donnelly boys had won, it would, probably, have puzzled Mr. Driscoll a little to catch up with his liabilities; but, as it was, his happiness was as extreme as was the gloom of his victims.

91

OBSERVATION FOURTEEN.

Wm. Windom's Beginning in Politics.

William Windom certainly had a charmed political life. Defeats which ordinarily retire men from politics forever only seemed to strengthen him for the future. He was a lawyer at Winona with a very limited practice when, in 1858, he was nominated for Congress, his friends giving him the place more from desire to aid him in starting life than anything else. He served five terms in the house, retiring in 1869. As if to make room for Mr. Windom, Daniel S. Norton of Winona, who had been elected to the senate in 1865, died on the 13th of July, 1870, and, on the 16th of July, Governor Austin appointed Mr. Windom to fill the unexpired term. He was then duly elected and re-elected to the senate, and, while serving his second term as senator, resigned to enter Garfield's cabinet as secretary of the treasury. When Arthur succeeded to the presidency, after Garfield's death he resigned from the cabinet, and A. J. Edgerton, who had been appointed to succeed him in the senate, also resigned to go on the bench, and Windom was, on Oct. 26, 1881, appointed to fill his own unexpired term in the senate. When he was defeated for re-election in 1883 no one expected that he would ever be again in public life. When the first rumors were set afloat that President-elect Harrison would tender Windom the treasury portfolio, they were ridiculed in Minnesota. But it proved to be correct, and he died in office, his almost tragic

Library of Congress

end occurring Jan. 29, 1900, at the annual banquet of the New York Board of Trade, just after he had concluded his address.

In 1863, when running for Congress, Mr. Windom opened the state campaign by an open-air speech on Bridge Square, in St. Paul. I reported his speech, long hand, for the Press, with which I was then connected. After the meeting he came to the office and asked to see the report, which I had written out to the extent of a couple of columns. Upon seeing it he begged me not to print it. He said he had but one speech and could not well prepare another, and he was intending to deliver this one all over the state. The report was very far from being verbatim, but he thought it would take the edge off if he should deliver this speech where the paper was read. I complied with his request, suppressing my already glowing account of the "immense attendance," "great enthusiasm," "brilliant oratory" of the speaker, etc., making only a few lines of what really was said. Before he died Mr. Windom's ability was greatly developed, and he left an enviable national reputation.

Mr. Windom was not the only politician with "one speech" for the campaign. Away back in the fifties Salmon P. Chase, then governor of Ohio, and subsequently the war secretary of the treasury, and later chief justice, had a "one-speech" campaign. It was at the time of the celebrated Breslin-Gibson defalcation. Breslin had been the Democratic state treasurer, and was a defaulter to the extent of several hundred thousand dollars. The defalcation was not known, and, as Republican prospects were quite bright, Breslin and his friends managed to get his (Breslin's) brother-in-law, Gibson, nominated for state treasurer on the Republican ticket. Gibson was elected, and for a time covered up the defalcation. Like all such matters, there was a final explosion, and the Democrats arraigned the Republicans for the offense because Gibson was in office, though he had not received the money. Chase was governor, and his campaign speech was entirely devoted to throwing the responsibility for the defalcation upon the Democrats. He delivered it first at Sandusky, and the Cincinnati Commercial sent a shorthand reporter there and printed the speech verbatim. Two or three weeks later Chase reached my town and I essayed to report him. I had the Commercial report with me, thinking he might use some portion of the same

Library of Congress

speech. To my surprise, he delivered the identical speech, word for word, and nothing else. I sat on the platform with the Commercial in my hand and "held copy" while he spoke. He had memorized it perfectly, and I did not have to prompt or correct him during the entire delivery. He told me afterwards he was very sorry he had been reported, as his speech referred to local issues, and he could not well change it.

93

OBSERVATION FIFTEEN.

Donnelly's Resurrection as a Republican.

One of the anomalies of the campaign of 1869 in Minnesota was the bringing out of Ignatius Donnelly as a Republican candidate for governor by the St. Paul Press. The Press had been a prominent factor in 1868 in forcing a split in the party, and, by securing a Republican candidate against Donnelly, had elected a Democrat to Congress, and retired Ignatius to private life. Donnelly had brought the battle to its logical conclusion by endeavoring to defeat Ramsey for re-election to the senate in the winter of 1869, and had failed. The defeat of Donnelly for the house was secured to prevent his defeating Ramsey for the senate. The Press was a thick and thin Ramsey organ, and during both the congressional and senatorial fight had excoriated Donnelly, and he, in turn, had on the stump played the editor and proprietor of the Press alive. It had been war to the knife and knife to the hilt, and then they removed the hilt so that the knife could go farther toward the vitals.

The Republican state convention was called for Sept. 9, 1869, and the public were edified on September 4th by an elaborate editorial in the Press, urging the nomination of Donnelly for governor. In view of what had previously occurred between Mr. D. and that party organ, the following extract from that editorial will be found of amusing interest:

"Aside from Donnelly's brilliant personal qualities, and the distinguished claim which a long course of useful public service gives him to honorable recognition by the state

Library of Congress

convention, there can be no doubt in view of his position as the leader of a powerful wing of the Republican party in this district, whose enthusiastic wishes were so disappointed in his defeat, his nomination at the head of the state ticket, with the cordial concurrence of 94 those heretofore opposed to him, would do more than anything else to extinguish the factious animosities and disaffections occasioned by the events of last fall.”

I am not prepared to say that this was not “good politics”—if the scheme had worked. But it didn't, and that's different.

The convention duly assembled September 9th, and Dana E. King of Meeker county was called to preside over its destinies. There had not been the usual preliminary scrimmages for offices. Judge Horace Austin, of the Sixth Judicial district, residing at St. Peter, was a prominent but not aggressive candidate for governor. John McKusick of Stillwater was in the field, and at the eleventh hour Donnelly had appeared. After the usual preliminaries the candidates were very tamely named by the orators. It was, in fact, a convention especially conspicuous for its dullness. It only took one ballot to settle the governorship, the vote standing Austin 147, Donnelly 64, McKusick 17. The support of the Press, under the circumstances, was too magnanimous for human credulity. The delegates concluded to take no chances, and nominated the other man.

There was really more contest for the lieutenant governor than for governor. A. J. Edgerton of Dodge county, Jared Benson of Anoka, W. H. Yale of Winona, W. R. Kinyon of Steele and H. L. Gordon of Wright being the candidates. Yale, Benson and Gordon were the only candidates polling many votes. The first ballot stood Yale 83, Gordon 63 and Benson 50. The third and last ballot stood Yale 139, Gordon 57 and Benson 29. Aside from Austin and Yale the rest of the ticket made by the convention without much contest was:

Secretary of State—Hans Mattson of Meeker county.

State Auditor—Charles McIlrath of Nicollet.

Library of Congress

State Treasurer—Emil Munch of Pine.

Attorney General—F. R. E. Cornell of Hennepin.

Chief Justice—C. C. Ripley of Fillmore.

Clerk of Supreme Court—Sherwood Hough of Ramsey.

The campaign which followed was as dull and lifeless as the convention itself. The next morning after the convention the Press expressed regret over Donnelly's defeat, and promised to give a cordial support to the ticket, but it did not do so. The 95 result was the ticket received the smallest majority any Republican state ticket has had in the history of the state, having but 183 majority over the Democrats and Prohibition, and but 1,947 plurality over the Democratic nominee.

There was one incident of the convention which subsequently became of considerable importance. W. D. Washburn of Minneapolis was a member of the committee on platform, and when the platform was reported he announced that two members of the committee desired to have a resolution included, but were over-ruled by the majority. It was accordingly agreed that the resolution should be reported separately. It was as follows:

Resolved, That the Republican party of the state insist that the 500,000 acres of land granted to the state for internal improvements be set apart for the liquidation of the Minnesota state railroad bonds, and that they be held for that purpose solely; that when the holders of said bonds shall agree to take these lands and fully and finally surrender all the bonds to the state that said lands be made over to said holders or their assigns or trustees as they may elect.

The resolution, after some debate, was voted down by 79 to 47. At that time the so-called repudiated Minnesota state bonds were a nightmare. The time was when the 500,000

Library of Congress

acres of land could have settled the whole bill, which subsequently was adjusted by an expenditure of between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000.

On the very threshold of statehood Minnesota had by legislative and popular vote decided to guarantee an issue of \$5,000,000 in bonds to secure railroad development. After \$2,275,000 had been issued and floated the inevitable crash came, and the state not only refused to issue more, but declined to pay those already outstanding. Mr. Washburn's resolution was a proposition to make an even trade of the lands for the bonds, and after ranking in the category of the states with dishonest credit for over 25 years, by a semi-legerdemain enactment we gave the lands and several millions in money besides.

Moral—Sometimes it pays, as a financial investment, to be just a little bit honest. In noting the small majority secured by General Austin it is also worthy of note that the only person really alarmed was Austin's Democratic opponent who, for a time, feared he was elected.

96

The late George L. Otis, at that time one of the prominent attorneys of the state and a resident of St. Paul, had been prevailed upon to take the Democratic nomination for governor. It was supposed to be only a matter of form without the remotest chance of an election. Otherwise Mr. Otis would not have accepted the nomination. Mr. Otis had just two aims in life—the enjoyment of the society of his family, and the practice of his profession. Public life was entirely distasteful, and, though he was forced to mingle some in public affairs, it was always under protest.

Horace Austin of St. Peter, then on the district bench, was the Republican nominee for governor. The party at that time, and for several years after, could scarcely be called the Republican party, as it more properly should be termed the Ramsey and anti-Ramsey factions. The terms I name for the elements of the party simply indicated that if Senator Ramsey's friends won, all the public pickings went to them, and it was necessary to keep up a serried front at all times. If an occasional break was allowed it would be dangerous,

Library of Congress

and hence, woe to the anti-Ramsey man who got a nomination. The Ramsey men were the shrewdest politicians in the state, and when they lost in a convention they generally administered a lesson to the successful nominee. They did not really want to turn the state over to the Democrats, but wished to sufficiently frighten the recalcitrant candidate to bring him into the fold as a repentant sinner, feeling that he must rely upon their gracious favor for his future political life. That was the discipline which the Ramseyites endeavored to administer to Horace Austin in 1869, with the view of forcing him into the Ramsey camp.

The election returns came in very slowly. Only a small portion of the state could be reached by telegraph, and a great deal of territory was dependent upon semi-weekly, tri-weekly and even weekly stage coaches. As the returns first came in from the more accessible cities and towns, Mr. Otis' election seemed almost certain. The first real interest he had shown in the campaign was when these returns were being received. His practice was worth at least five times the beggarly salary then allowed the governor, and this, added to his distaste for office, caused his alarm. It was, perhaps, ten days or two weeks before the result was absolutely known, and Mr. Otis would come to my office every day, before my paper was issued, hoping to obtain news favorable to his defeat. I never saw a candidate hoping for success have more anxiety than he did hoping for defeat.

That was the first campaign when the Prohibitionists put a state ticket in the field. The official canvass gave Austin 27,348, Otis 25,401, Cobb (Prohibitionist) 1,764. This left Austin only 183 majority, and his plurality over Otis was but 1,947. That was an exceedingly small margin for the Republicans in those days.

In spite of the intended castigation by the Ramseyites, it did not conquer Governor Austin, and his gubernatorial career of two terms was in the anti-Ramsey interest, and led up to the final overthrow of the Ramsey dynasty, when Senator C. K. Davis came into his kingdom.

Library of Congress

Horace Austin made an excellent governor, albeit his term from 1870 to 1874 was less eventful than many, with the exception of one incident, but that one exception stamped it with an importance which many other governors of the state have not obtained for their records. The state had half a million acres of land which had been given by the general government for internal improvements. There was considerable controversy as to the latitude of the term "internal improvements," those who desired the lands being very liberal in their construction. Growing out of this liberality of thought during a session of the legislature in 1871 a combination was gotten up to run railroads all about the state, and divide up the lands with the various roads. More attention was given during the session to this land combine than all other legislation considered. The following parceling out of the lands to projected roads shows the ingenuity and the strength the scheme had, as it appealed to nearly every section of the state, and every member could feel that he was getting a slice for his constituents. 7

98

Lines Proposed— Acres.

Dubuque & St. Paul, from Austin via Mantorville 50,000

Davenport & St. Paul railroad, from the southern line of the state via Fountain and Rochester to a point of junction with the Dubuque & St. Paul at Pine Island 50,500

To a common track of these two roads to be given to the one reaching Pine Island first 32,000

Minneapolis & St. Louis 65,000

Minneapolis & Watertown 10,000

Minnesota & Northwestern, from Mankato via New Ulm and Big Stone Lake 80,000

Library of Congress

Farmington to state line 15,000

Mankato to St. Cloud 75,000

From St. Cloud up Sauk Valley 47,000

Winona to La Crescent 25,000

Lake Pepin & Omaha 50,000

Total 500,000

The bill was introduced in the senate on the 17th of February and passed on the 18th by a vote of 12 to 8. The combination was not quite so strong in the house. It took 24 votes to pass a bill in the house at that time, and on most of the preliminary votes the forces stood 24 to 23. But it finally got through the house on February 28th by 26 to 21. The bill had been incubating six weeks before it was introduced, and the combine was ready for work when it came in.

And now came the tug of war. Would or would not Governor Austin veto the measure? was the great problem. Probably as great pressure was brought to bear upon him to sign the bill as any governor of the state has ever felt. The opponents, to a moderate degree, also urged a veto, but it was the friends of the bill who made life a burden, and according to the reports of the others there were offers to furnish substantial reasons why the bill should be signed. Governor Austin, however, was firm, and at 11 o'clock on March 3d, the last night of the session, he sent in a strong veto message. One of the reasons he gave for the veto was the belief that the passage had been secured by the desire of members to obtain other legislation, and they found it necessary to come into the land combine in order to secure their local bills. He very forcibly showed that the division of the 99 lands as proposed would amount to nothing for anyone in securing railroads in this forcible paragraph:

Library of Congress

“Within the past 14 years the general government has granted in the aid of railroads in the state (not including deficiencies not to be realized) 15,500,000 acres of the public domain and the state about 1,700,000 acres, making a total of 17,200,000 acres, worth at least \$43,000,000, but held by the companies at from \$5 to \$10 per acre, and there has been given by our people as local aid, including right of way, bonds issued and other legal obligations to the amount in the aggregate of at least \$3,000,000 more, and within these 14 years, with \$46,000,000 of subsidies, there has been completed about 1,000 miles of road. This bill contemplates aiding in the construction of an established length of 1,022 miles of road, giving an average of 488 acres per mile. The lands here granted lie on the frontier, and are less valuable per acre than the grants to the old roads. The friends of the bill estimate this grant as worth \$1,000,000. Comment is unnecessary.”

To secure the necessary votes to carry the measure, the managers had been compelled to make too liberal a division. When the veto message had been read to the senate there was the usual motion to pass it over the governor's veto, and it was lost by a vote of 12 to 10, two-thirds being necessary. The only Republican senators who voted to sustain the governor were Farmer, Petit, Phillipsbury and Sabin.

I think it is no exaggeration to say that no matter of pure legislation has ever created so much interest and excitement in the state as that proposition to divide the 500,000 acres. There have been others which brought more ducats to the front, for I do not think any cold cash was used on this occasion. There was an immense amount of swapping legislation. I had learned that the veto was coming, and on the pledge that I would not use it prematurely, had obtained an advance copy of the message. I put it in type and printed a Dispatch extra containing it. In order to be sure that no mistake occurred by circulating in advance of the governor, after the extras were printed I secured about 25 newsboys and locked up the whole outfit in my pressroom, ready to rush to the capitol the moment the proper L. of C. 100 time arrived. The telephone had not arrived at that time, and a mounted messenger was kept in waiting at the capitol, while I stood guard at the

Library of Congress

executive office. The moment the messenger from the governor started to carry the veto to the senate, my messenger started to the Dispatch office, and by the time the secretary of the senate was ready to announce the message the 11 p. m. extra of the Dispatch was on sale in the capitol. The senators obtained them, and the reading of the secretary, which was slow, was merely nominal, as all over the senate chamber the senators were perusing the printed extra during the official reading, and one senator interrupted the reading to complain that the text, as read, varied in some verbal manner from the printed copy. It was an error in reading made by the secretary. A veto is only sent to the branch of the legislature where the bill originates, and this, being a senate bill, the manuscript copy of the veto was only sent to that branch. The message created so much interest that while the original copy was being read to the senate, the clerk of the house read it to the representatives from a Dispatch extra. The house, in fact, began debating and offering josh resolutions on the message before the secretary had completed the reading in the senate. Between the attraction of the last night of the session and the excitement over the land bill, there were several hundred people at the capitol, and the night extra was as eagerly sought by the crowd as if the fate of the nation hung upon it. It was the only time, in Minnesota at least, where a veto message has been simultaneously read in both branches of the legislature.

One thing which smoothed Governor Austin's official pathway was his excellent choice of private secretary in the person of Hon. A. R. McGill. Mr. McGill was a fellow townsman of the governor's and the editor of the St. Peter Tribune at the time of his appointment. Newspaper men, as a rule, can guide an official correctly and meet the public in a satisfactory manner. Regulating things and assuming to know everything is right in their line of business. Mr. McGill was so good an exemplification of this that he graduated from private secretary to insurance commissioner, and 13 years after he had retired from the governor's office as a subordinate he re-entered as the chief executive of the state.

OBSERVATION SIXTEEN.

The Second Election of Alexander Ramsey to the Senate without a Vote to Spare.

It must not be supposed that the great political fight of 1868 ended the contest between Donnelly and the Ramsey crowd. It was continued for years, and, like the Kentucky feuds, only ended when most of the active participants were securely planted underground. An election for Ramsey's successor in the senate was due in January, 1869, only two months after the disastrous election of 1868, and the Donnelly forces kept their armor right on and duly burnished. Ramsey was, of course, a candidate to succeed himself. Donnelly had been accused of being a candidate for the senate all through the campaign, and after his defeat for the house he openly became one. The smart thing for the Ramsey men to have done would have been to elect Donnelly to the house instead of bolting, and placing him under obligations. Then, by promising him the earth (in the future), they might have kept him out of the race and had plain sailing. As it was, Donnelly had reached that desperate state in politics where he had nothing to lose, because it was already lost, and everything to gain. A man in that position is a hard hitter and a desperate fighter. To add interest to the occasion, ex-Senator Morton S. Wilkinson, who had been shelved by Norton, entered the lists, and there was a triangular fight on hand, which bid fair to make Mr. Ramsey serious trouble.

From the time the legislature met until the result, nothing but the senatorial fight was talked of. All of the candidates were present in person, the Ramsey headquarters being at the International Hotel (since burned), at the corner of Seventh and 102 Jackson, and Donnelly and Wilkinson being located at the Merchants. The two last named were in complete accord, albeit each one was a little suspicious that the other might not tote fair. They were at least a unit in their desire to defeat Ramsey, and only divided as to who should be the lucky man. There were 54 Republicans in the legislature, and it required 28 to secure the caucus nomination. Perhaps nothing so well illustrates how wrought up Mr. Donnelly was as to state that, becoming satisfied he could not secure more than 26 votes

Library of Congress

at the outset, he decided not to have his name presented at the caucus. I was always in doubt whether or not it was a put-up job, but, at all events, two or three of Wilkinson's staunch supporters vehemently declared that they would never support Mr. Donnelly. They declared themselves in readiness to vote for Ramsey rather than for Donnelly. As Ramsey personally had been hostile to Donnelly, and Ramsey's friends had been his undoing, Donnelly was ready to sacrifice anything to even the account. Consequently he made the sacrifice, believing that he could give every one of his friends to Wilkinson, though the sequel proved that that was a delusion.

Mr. Donnelly's withdrawal was not made public until the night of the caucus, which was held on the evening of Jan. 14, 1869. A few hours before the legislative caucus the Ramsey men held a caucus at the International, and made each one present not only arise and be counted, but called on them, individually, to publicly pledge themselves to Ramsey's cause by some utterance. I doubt whether there has ever been such another iron-clad caucus as that held in the state. I was in the anti-Ramsey ranks, but we were not at all disturbed by the report that the Ramsey caucus had more than 28 present or accounted for. We had more than that pledged against Ramsey. Of course, both sides knew that in the outcome some one would get cheated, but with that sanguineness peculiar to politics each side thought that the double dealers would cheat the other fellow.

The Ramsey men, however, were more suspicious of their forces than the Donnellyites. They accordingly got a red card printed, bearing Ramsey's name, so that they could spot anyone who did not keep faith. This red card scheme was kept secret, 103 save to a very few in the holy of holies of Ramsey's temple. Late in the afternoon of the day of the caucus I obtained one of the red cards (how it is not necessary to explain, as some people are still alive), and immediately set about printing similar cards bearing Wilkinson's name. The Press people had used a peculiar tint of red which it was not easy to match. General Averill was at the head of the only wholesale paper house in town, and his store was closed for the night before I got there, in search of the cardboard. Time was precious, and I went to General Averill's house for aid. As he was with the antis, he readily left his

Library of Congress

half-finished supper, and, hastening to the store, we were rewarded by finding an exact match for the Ramsey cardboard. As a result the Donnelly-Wilkinson forces were supplied, half an hour before the caucus, with tickets bearing Wilkinson's name, which would pass muster as the simon pure Ramsey article when dropped in the box before the eyes of the tellers. A number of Wilkinson red tickets were actually voted, and the Press the next morning said that Ramsey's vote was eight less than his positive pledges. And still there was the promised number of red cardboards in the hat.

The first move of the Ramseyites in the caucus was a master stroke and proved a winner. It was to refuse an informal ballot. They were absolutely certain that a large number of their pledged men would never vote twice for Ramsey, and it was do or die on the first ballot. The Ramsey men elected Dana E. King, brother of Wm. S. King, chairman of the caucus, and two tellers, John Hobart of Goodhue and Augustus Armstrong of Albert Lea, while Dr. S. B. Sheardown was the Wilkinson teller. The Ramsey forces had the majority publicly pledged and on open vote they stuck to their text. The hope and promise the Wilkinson men had was that on the secret ballot they would prove false to their Ramsey promise. The motion to make the first vote formal was viva voce, and the pledged men carried it. This was an unheard of procedure in politics, and the Wilkinson men did not have wit enough to make it informal by dropping in one or two extra ballots, showing more votes in the hat than there were in the caucus. There were 54 persons present. Necessary to a choice 28. The first and only 104 ballot stood: Ramsey 28, Wilkinson 22, McMillan 1, Windom 1, W. H. C. Folsom 1, blank 1. And the light went out in the Wilkinson-Donnelly camp.

There is no shadow of doubt that if there had been a second ballot there would have been no second term for Ramsey. The anti-Ramsey forces were not prepared for the tactics of making the first ballot formal, and were taken off their feet. Charley Clarke of Minneapolis engineered the making of the first ballot formal, and he showed good generalship. I think such a thing as making the first ballot formal when there was a contest has never been known, before or since, in any political caucus or convention in the state. And, after all,

Library of Congress

when it was too late it was discovered that the winning ballot should have been informal, because 55 votes were cast while only 54 men were present. W. D. Washburn was sufficiently a candidate to get some pasters printed bearing his name, and somebody had taken one of the Ramsey red cards and pasted Washburn's name over it. The red tickets were not distributed until the ballot was ordered, and no one had a chance to "fix" his Ramsey ticket save under the lynx-eyed gaze of Clarke, King and others. The member "fixing" that ticket, in his haste and nervousness, had not well secured the paster, and it came off in the hat. It was found, curled up in the pile of tickets, and was legible. The Ramsey ticket showed that it had had a paster on its surface. In spite of this, the tellers threw the slip away bearing Washburn's name and counted the ticket upon which it had been placed for Ramsey. That one vote gave Ramsey 28, the exact number necessary, and no more. Both ballots should have been counted. That would have made one too many votes and forced another ballot in spite of the Ramsey tactics. Dr. Sheardown, the Wilkinson teller, was a most faithful and honest friend, but he was not shrewd in politics or he would have insisted on counting both paster and red ticket.

The two pivotal men who gave the nomination to Ramsey were Senator W. W. Prindle and Representative George Bryant, both of Wabasha county. That county was intensely strong for Donnelly, and these men excused themselves by saying that so long as Donnelly was in the field they would stand by him, 105 but on his withdrawal they were at liberty to go for Ramsey. It made such a storm that they held a pocket meeting at Wabasha, which resolved that they did right.

The election in the legislature took place January 19th, and resulted in Ramsey receiving 52 votes, one Republican being absent and one excused. The Democrats, 13 in number, voted for C. W. Nash.

One of the poetic gems of that campaign was this:

Library of Congress

The combat deepens—on ye brave, Who rush to Ramsey, “stamps” to save, Wave, Aleck, all your greenbacks, wave, And charge it to the treasury.

It was this campaign which gave birth to the “seed wheat” term, which has been handed down in Minnesota politics ever since. One of Donnelly's ardent supporters was discovered coming out of the Ramsey headquarters at the International and a friend said to him:

“What are you doing there—you are not going to vote for Ramsey, are you?”

“Oh, no, no,” was the reply. “I just went in to see a man who wants to sell some seed wheat.”

His vote was duly recorded for Ramsey at the caucus.

The St. Paul Press claimed, the next morning after the caucus in 1869, had nominated Senator Ramsey for re-election, that Ramsey received eight votes less than were positively pledged to him. This was an undoubted fact, and forcibly demonstrates the dilemma in which politicians are placed. I happen to be able to give an account of how one of the eight became minus to Ramsey, and it will illustrate a very common situation in politics.

One of the prominent and active members of the legislature was indebted to Wilkinson for a valuable federal office, bestowed when he (Wilkinson) was United States senator. The legislator still had future favors to ask, and, prior to knowing that Wilkinson would be a candidate for the senate against Ramsey, had pledged himself to Ramsey. Wilkinson's candidacy threw the legislator into a cold perspiration. Wilk had come on earth again by being elected to the house from the First district, and 106 was due to take his seat with the incoming administration of General Grant in March, 1869. Consequently, whether Wilkinson lost or won the senatorship, he would still be in the political saddle, prepared to render good or evil to those who had votes in the legislature. On the other hand, if Ramsey

Library of Congress

lost, he would be politically dead; and could neither reward his friends nor punish his enemies. As politics go, it is not surprising that the man with a vote in the legislature was on both sides.

This dual politician was taken in hand by a friend of Wilkinson's, and the obligations of the past, as well as the hopes of the future (especially the latter), were pleaded with such force that he gave his positive promise to vote for Wilkinson in the caucus. He was, however, so conspicuous in the Ramsey camp that he was obliged to attend the secret Ramsey meetings, and was present at the last one, held a few hours before the caucus, and renewed his pledge of loyalty to Ramsey. But for the fact that the Wilkinson forces secured red tickets, similar to the Ramsey document, he would probably have kept his Ramsey pledge, as that was public, while the other was very private. The avowed Wilkinson men voted plain white tickets, and he could not use such a ticket without being detected. It was for the very purpose of preventing such detection that the red ticket was devised by the Ramsey people, and the importance of meeting red with red could not be overestimated by the anti-Ramsey faction.

A short time before the caucus Wilkinson's friend went to the legislator and gave him a red ticket bearing Wilkinson's name. In doing so he said:

“How will I know that you actually vote this ticket?”

“I will put a pinhole in it,” was the quick-witted reply of the legislator.

When the battle was over, the Wilkinson manipulator inspected the ballots, and, sure enough, Wilkinson was there in red, with a pinhole through him.

The Ramsey men were shrewd enough to inspect the Wilkinson reds very closely, and they, too, discovered the pinhole, and knew it was “given as a sign.” They made strenuous efforts to ascertain who the pinhole traitor in their ranks was, in order 107 to administer political punishment, but the secret was kept, and no revenge was ever taken. This dual

politician went to his grave many years ago, and I think but one person now living besides myself knows his name. I am sure that many of the old-time politicians would be glad to know who he was, even at this distant day, as it would explain what was a great mystery at the time. But he averaged well with the politicians of that day and this, and I will not disturb his present rest by specific identification. One of the “eight shrinkage” is thus accounted for, and the other seven I may reach in a later edition.

108

OBSERVATION SEVENTEEN.

The Liberal Republicans of 1872.

While a thousand men will leave their homes, pay railroad fare to the city and hotel bills, not to mention cigars, drinks and treats thrown in, for the purpose of selecting four delegates to a national convention, it is refreshing to note that there was once a prominent national convention where there was no scramble to be on the delegation from Minnesota. As illustrative of a thousand men coming together for practically nothing, and as proof positive that such an event will happen, I cite the Republican convention held in Minneapolis the current year, 1904, to select four delegates at large to attend the national convention at Chicago which nominated President Roosevelt.

A month before the convention met the names of the four delegates were printed in the newspapers as having been selected by the managers of the party, and consequently the state convention at Minneapolis was composed of a mere set of automatons. They came down, as stated, perspired, drank and smoked in the interest of their party, and named the identical four delegates whose names had been printed in the papers for weeks previously.

Now let us look at the convention where there was no scramble to be a delegate. In 1872 there was a violent outbreak in the Republican party against President Grant. This was largely due to the fact that the rugged old soldier had selected a set of friends and stuck by

Library of Congress

them through thick and thin. No president ever pleased everybody, and the fact that Grant must of necessity favor some crowd rendered it morally certain that he would offend some other crowd.

109

This was the situation in 1872, and the Republican party was never so near its disruption as at that eventful period. I had been in revolt against pretty much everything since the disastrous Donnelly campaign of 1868, only waiting to see an opportunity to produce an everlasting smash in anything which came up; and when I could not absolutely find a head to hit I would endeavor to manufacture one, trusting to have the head bob up serenely and justify the violent action.

The so-called liberal Republicans of 1872 had no state, district or national organization. Everything was crude, and the call for the convention to be held at Cincinnati was for a mass convention. But the times were ripe for mischief. Carl Schurz, Samuel Bowles of the Springfield (Mass) Republican, Murat Halstead of the Cincinnati Commercial and other quite conspicuous national characters were leaders in the revolt. Consequently, when I appeared in the role of a volunteer John the Baptist for the crusade I had a small but immediate following. The Dispatch rallied Minnesota to the front with unceasing energy. The more General Grant was assailed the more he stood by his friends, and the so-called liberal Republicans, but in reality *illiberal*, came into existence in quite a formidable manner. Without some newspaper to lead the way no progress could have been made, as there was no way for the malcontents to be brought together, but the newspaper afforded the nucleus. The result was that by great effort we secured enough recalcitrant Republicans in Minnesota to go to Cincinnati to make up a delegation, when it was decided later to make it a delegate instead of a mass convention.

I do not think any state conventions were held. At all events, most of the states did like Minnesota, and held no convention, trusting to those who might volunteer to go. There was such a revolt and restlessness in the Republican ranks that thousands gathered

Library of Congress

at Cincinnati in an informal manner. It was a mass, or, perhaps, I might say, a mob convention, as it was unwieldy and impossible to manage in its original form. The result was, after the crowd had gathered, the manipulators decided to make it a delegate convention, giving each state the representation usually accorded, of delegates to double the number 110 of the members of the senate and house from the respective states. That gave Minnesota the cabalistic number "10," which figured quite prominently in our political history eight years later. When we came to count noses a few days before the convention was to convene, we found there were 11 Minnesotans at Cincinnati, and, as I was entitled to a newspaper seat, the remaining "10" were declared delegates, and everybody was as happy as a clam at high tide.

The delegation thus auspiciously made up was composed of M. S. Wilkinson and J. B. Hubbell of Mankato, Aaron Goodrich, Samuel Mayall, John X. Davidson and Theodore Heilscher of St. Paul, W. W. Mayo of Rochester, Thomas Wilson of Winona, C. D. Sherwood of Fillmore county and H. Williams, who seems to have been unidentified at the time. The honors were further divided, making Wilkinson chairman or president of the delegation, Goodrich vice president, Heilscher member of the platform committee, and so on until everyone had a peg to hand on. W. L. Ames of St. Paul and F. Schulenberg of Stillwater appeared the second day and were given seats as alternates. The delegation was far from harmonious as to the selection of a candidate. Goodrich thought the whole movement would be sent to the dogs if David Davis of Illinois was not made the nominee for president. Wilkinson pinned his faith to ex-Senator Trumbull of Illinois. Mayall was sure that Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts was the man for the movement. I do not recall that Greeley had a single supporter in the delegation. This Minnesota sentiment was a fair representation of the whole convention. It was anybody to beat Grant, but a multitude of counsels as to who the leader should be. Whitelaw Reid, the managing editor of the New York Tribune, was present, leading a forlorn hope for Greeley—evidently foreseeing that the promotion of his chief to the presidency would make him (Reid) editor of the Tribune. At first the candidacy of Greeley was almost regarded as a joke. The city

Library of Congress

was thronged with visitors, and the talk of the streets and hotels at the outset was divided between Adams, Trumbull and Davis. Adams was the decided favorite. This was partly due to the vigorous campaign made by the Cincinnati Commercial (Rep.) 111 in Adams' behalf. Murat Halsted edited the Commercial at that time, and Samuel Bowles, Sr., of the Springfield (Mass.) Republican joined him in writing for the Commercial in support of Adams. The Commercial bristled all over with Adams enthusiasm. The Enquirer (Dem.) held up the forlorn Greeley hope, and, as it was hoped the Democrats would ratify the nominee, the action of the Enquirer was quite a bracer for Greeley. The staid old Gazette stood by Grant and the straight Republican faith.

The platform gave about as much trouble as the ticket. The tariff was a much mooted question, and how any Republican could stand on a tariff platform which Democrats could endorse was one of the "little joker" problems of politics. The strong argument urged against Greeley was that he had always bitterly fought the Democrats on the tariff, favoring high protection, and his nomination, it was claimed, would render a Democratic endorsement impossible. The versatility of the platform maker is something to be admired, even if the platform is not. When the platform came out of the committee it relegated the tariff to the congressional districts as a "local issue." After this the road for Greeley's success was apparently easy. Balloting was begun at noon of the third day, and the first ballot stood: Adams 203, Greeley 160, Trumbull 110, Davis 92½. The sixth and last ballot stood: Greeley 338, Adams 321. When it was seen that Greeley was the nominee, changes poured in, and the official record of the last ballot was Greeley 482, Adams 147. The convention went wild, as usual, over the result, and, while there was sore disappointment, to have heard the yells and seen the hats tossed high in the air, one might be pardoned for thinking every man in the convention had secured his first choice. It was a deal with the friends of Gratz Brown of Missouri to give Brown the nomination for vice president, which pulled Greeley through. The Democrats, with much dissension in their ranks, held a national convention in Baltimore, in July, and ratified the Cincinnati ticket, declaring on the tariff:

Library of Congress

"We remit the discussion of the subject to the people in the congressional districts, and to the decision of the congress thereon, wholly free from executive interference or dictation."

112

Greeley made a most brilliant campaign, making 40 able speeches, in which he never repeated himself, but proved he had mastered the art of political diplomacy. But September and October were fatal to his prospects, and he only secured 66 electoral votes to 286 for Grant. In the popular vote Grant received 3,597,070 votes and Greeley 2,841,097. In Minnesota Grant had 55,17 to 34,423 for Greeley. The only states Greeley carried were Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, South Carolina and Tennessee. Even New Jersey failed to go Democratic.

The campaign killed Greeley. The second day after the election he published a card, saying that he had resumed control of the Tribune, but he had not. The crafty Whitelaw Reid, who had so ardently supported him at Cincinnati, was in the saddle in the Tribune office and excluded Greeley's editorials when he saw fit. This was the finishing blow, his mind tottered, and November 29th, but a trifle over three weeks after his defeat, he was dead.

Greeley could have survived political adversity, but the New York Tribune was his heart and soul, his very life blood, and after his defeat, and it dawned upon him that he was no longer the Tribune, but that Whitelaw Reid was in the saddle and could absolutely exclude his (Greeley's) editorials, he could no longer endure the strain, and his mind gave way. It was a moral murder to dethrone him from the Tribune, but human ambition stops at nothing. Greeley's death in a madhouse three weeks after election was a pitiful tragedy. Whitelaw Reid's marriage to the daughter of D. O. Mills, the California millionaire, enabled him to become the owner of the Tribune as well as the editor. But the halo of Horace Greeley's fame will cling to the Tribune for many generations. Some day his name and fame, and even his existence, will not even be a memory, only a chapter of forgotten

history. I am pleased to say that that period has not yet been reached, though I do not anticipate it is very far distant.

113

OBSERVATION EIGHTEEN.

How I Was Appointed Pension Agent but Failed to Get Confirmation—The Results.

In presenting this observation to the public, I wish to say in a prefatory way that the story herein told was, a few years ago, narrated by myself in, substantially, its present form, at a gathering of 25 or 30 gentlemen at a private residence in St. Paul for a political evening. At that gathering both Governor Ramsey and Senator Davis were present, and so far as what I said referred to them personally they conceded that the statements were correct.

About 4 o'clock one morning, in the early summer of 1870, there was a tapping on the outside window of my sleeping apartment, which awoke me. A newspaper friend on his way home had called to tell me that the Associated Press to the morning paper which he represented had brought the news that I was appointed pension agent for the State of Minnesota. Having anticipated nothing of the kind, the information came to me as a matter of great surprise, and I may add, as well, as a matter of great pleasure.

At that time the pension office was considered one of the choicest plums in the state, though there were probably others with larger compensation. It carried with it a net revenue of \$6,000 per annum, which is not an uncomfortable revenue to add to any man's business.

My first effort, when I arose, was to ascertain how it happened. I ultimately learned that I was indebted to General Garfield (later president of the United States) for the position. My father and brother, being located in the home county of General Garfield in Ohio had given him his first start in political life by making it certain that he could go to the

Library of Congress

state senate of Ohio. My brother happened to visit Washington a little previously to this appointment, and, meeting General Garfield, the matter came up.

Hon. J. D. Cox of Toledo, Ohio, was a warm personal friend of General Garfield; he was also secretary of the interior, and a word from Garfield secured the pension agency appointment.

Looking back at the incident after the lapse of over thirty years, it is positively amusing to me to recall the almost blanched cheeks of my political opponents as I met them on the street that day.

I had been publishing the Dispatch for two or three years, and during nearly all the time was involved in a bitter factional controversy inside of the Republican party. As I had not learned at that time to spare anyone who seemed to me to deserve criticism, I fancy that I had obtained about as sincere and bitter political enemies as any man can secure in politics. The result was that there were numerous conferences that day among my enemies to determine what could be done to prevent Hall from being pension agent. Unfortunately, the Atlantic cable had been laid a short time previous to this episode, and that was my undoing. Senator Ramsey was in Paris at the time negotiating a new postal treaty with France and the waters of the ocean sizzled that day with messages from St. Paul to Paris protesting against this appointment.

The result was that Senator Ramsey promptly cabled General Grant asking that the appointment should be held up until he returned. President Grant was at Long Branch, but he suspended the festivities of the hour long enough to wire Secretary Cox to hold me up, which, of course, was done.

Before this telegraphic correspondence took place, however, the formal appointment had been made out and forwarded to me, accompanied by a bond for \$250,000. There were no surety companies in those days; but that commission, notwithstanding the large bond,

Library of Congress

looked very good to me when it reached me, and I think I read it over till I could repeat it as readily as if it had been the Lord's prayer.

115

Inspired by its language I also went out, and in a few days called on my political friends, who were as warm in their friendships as the other fellows were in their enmities, and made up my bond, which I duly forwarded to Washington. It was not a great while before I found that there was a cog loose somewhere, as no response came beyond the mere formal acknowledgment relative to the bond. Of course, I continued investigating to see what the trouble was, and finally ascertained the action Senator Ramsey had taken, inspired by his St. Paul friends. In fact, the atmosphere about St. Paul for a time indicated that some great calamity had fallen or was about to fall upon the community or the world at large.

In due time Senator Ramsey returned to the United States, but did not come to St. Paul. As the mountain would not come to Mahomet, I concluded that it was better for Mahomet to go to the mountain, and so I went down to Washington to see what could be done in the matter.

Judge R. F. Crowell was Senator Ramsey's private secretary. It so happened that Judge Crowell was greatly indebted to me for political favors and felt very kindly toward me personally. He was especially anxious to help me secure the appointment, and I thought the alpha and omega of life depended on my obtaining that \$6,000 per annum.

I was publishing an independent newspaper whose chief occupation during the then short period of its existence was to make mischief for the Republican party; and I argued to myself that possibly it would be a good thing for the harmony of the party if I came into the fold, as I was and always had been up to that time a straight and strenuous Republican. I worked the problem out in my own mind before calling upon Senator Ramsey, and thought I would put the case to him in what seemed to me a manly way. I went with Judge Crowell

Library of Congress

to call upon Senator Ramsey and said to him, in substance, "Senator, I do not claim that I have any reason to ask you for a favor. I have done my best to oppose your election as senator. I represented an element in the party which was opposed to you, and represented it as vigorously as I knew how. I have simply one suggestion to submit to you. You are familiar with the situation; 116 you are familiar with the stormy times we have had and the dissensions in the party. I want to ask you if you do not think it would be advisable and good politics under all the circumstances, as you are in no wise responsible for my appointment, to allow me to hold the position. I recognize that I cannot retain it without confirmation by the senate and that you absolutely control that, so that it is entirely in your hands whether I shall be allowed to retain the position which General Garfield has kindly secured for me."

This argument, in my youthful verdancy, seemed to me to make an impression upon Senator Ramsey. Perhaps nothing could better illustrate how little I knew of men and affairs at that time than the thought I had that I had made an impression upon him. His life-long political friends were my enemies, and were loading the mails as well as the wires with demands, threats and all kinds of incendiary documents against my holding the position; and anyone of mature years or any experience in political life might have known that no influence whatever could have ever induced Senator Ramsey to allow my confirmation. In fact, he would have written his political death warrant if he had allowed it, though, as the sequel proved, he wrote his political death warrant by turning me down.

In calmer and wiser moments I long since came to the conclusion that Senator Ramsey did exactly what he ought to have done when he refused me. It was before the consolidation of The Pioneer and The Press.

The Press had in reality been started by Governor Marshall in 1860 with the view of supporting Ramsey and his faction. It had consistently been his friend through storm and sunshine. The Press demanded my scalp, and it would not have been decent for him to have turned down his old friends simply upon the vague idea that a former political

Library of Congress

enemy transformed into a friend by selfish motives might possibly at some vague and indefinite period be "good." For twenty-five years the proprietors of the Press and myself were speechless, though we met frequently, and that their demands upon Ramsey should have been regarded in view of the state of feelings existing between us, both as citizens and as editors, was the most natural thing in 117 the world. I am glad to say that in later years Senator Ramsey and myself became excellent friends. We used to talk it over and have a good friendly laugh, especially over the bushels of oysters which Judge Crowell and myself managed to conceal that memorable night when what I thought the destiny of the world was hanging in the balance. But time brings its revenges, and it did in this case.

After my argument Senator Ramsey assured me in his suave way that he would be very glad to comply with my request if he possibly could. I saw him two or three times while in Washington, and left the city thoroughly under the impression that I was going to win; in fact, Judge Crowell, who was really my friend, was under the same impression, so that I was not the only "vealy" personage in the matter.

I remember very well the memorable night when I had it out with Ramsey, calling upon him two or three times the same evening. Between our calls Judge Crowell and myself went out to Harvey's and braced up with a bushel or two of steamed oysters. When we rounded up the evening festivities, about half past two in the morning, we found that between us we had eaten four bushels and a half of steamed oysters. That incident shows the strenuousness of the situation.

As a matter of fact, my argument with Senator Ramsey implied, without absolutely saying so, that I would publish a "good" and straight Republican newspaper if my request was granted. In other words, I was ready to sell my soul for a mess of pottage. As I look at it now I am free to say I am ashamed of it. But those were strenuous times, and I think I would have sold souls "short" at that time and gone "long" on salvation if I could have gotten that office. But, of course, I didn't get it, and never had the remotest chance of getting it outside of my own imagination.

In due time Colonel Rogers, a crippled officer in the Union service, was appointed to the office, and my bond was returned to me, and years ago consigned to the waste-paper basket.

The whole object of telling this story, as I told it at the meeting of the gentlemen before mentioned, is to show what large results grow out of what really was a small affair in the body politic, though it was an immense affair to me personally.

118

My overtures for peace having been spurned by Senator Ramsey, I simply considered that my ambition in life was to be more obstreperous than ever, and felt there was nothing for me to do but to make mischief. The consequence was I was continually looking for heads with a view of hitting them, and I generally found some.

A little later the question of Senator Ramsey having a third term in the senate was coming up; and, of course, for all these great events there must be slates made up. The Ramsey slate was accordingly fixed up, with W. D. Washburn of Minneapolis as the candidate for governor. If that slate had gone through Senator Ramsey would have easily been re-elected for his third term, but unfortunately for him I was still on earth and rendered absolutely reckless by the fatal mistake he had made in turning me down. It was not a very high motive, I admit, but it was a motive nevertheless of evening up the deal. And I also admit that I took a great deal of satisfaction in doing it.

In casting about to see what I could do to disrupt the slate, I hit upon the plan of bringing out another candidate for governor against Washburn, knowing that everything was set up for Washburn.

Hon. C. K. Davis was at that time United States district attorney, appointed by Ramsey. He had gained some fame and prestige in the state by his lecture on "Modern Feudalism." I shall treat in another chapter more in detail of the manner in which I brought Mr. Davis to

Library of Congress

the front. I only wish to state here briefly and bluntly the facts. I had very little acquaintance with Davis at that time, excepting that the town was so small that everybody knew everybody else. We were not intimate, and there was no particular reason why I should present his name for governor, except with the deliberate intention of defeating Washburn and so knock one of the main props out from under Ramsey's desire for a third term in the United States senate. Without prolonging I can state what everyone now knows, that the move was successful. After a bitter contest in an all-day convention, Mr. Davis was nominated for governor over Washburn by one vote, and the face of Minnesota politics has worn a different hue ever 119 since. Davis was elected governor by a small majority. I always felt that it was really the intention of the Republican forces to defeat him because it was well understood that if he was elected governor he would also be a candidate for the senate; in fact one of the strongest arguments I used in his behalf in my newspaper was that if Davis was elected governor he would oppose Ramsey for the senate. There was no concealment about it. In fact I think I could have made at times a greater political success by being a little more wary and secretive, but I generally followed the rule, when I had anything to say, to say it very plainly and with no concealment, leaving God and the other members of the Republican party to determine the results.

To be brief, Davis was elected. The celebrated senatorial contest ensued in which Davis and his friends came in as a disturbing factor. The Ramsey caucus was bolted, Ramsey was defeated for the third term, and Judge McMillan elected in his place.

Mr. Washburn has attained high honors since then, but he never has been governor of Minnesota as yet, and Senator Ramsey went to his grave deprived of his third term as senator. All of this grew out of the little incident I have narrated, where for the disgraceful sop of a \$6,000 office I was ready to be "good."

Looking back at it calmly and dispassionately after the lapse of years, I feel grateful to Senator Ramsey and my political enemies for guarding against any such accident as might have happened to me if I really had been "good."

Library of Congress

In writing this chapter I do not assume that it will interest the public at all, but it interests me immensely, and I am a good deal more desirous of interesting myself than I am my readers. It does, however, show that important political results sometimes flow from very trivial affairs; and I am perfectly willing to frankly state that no event in the entire fifty years of the political history of Minnesota has been fraught with as momentous consequences to the Republican party, to the state, and to the persons in immediate interest as was the petty little pension agency matter.

Senator Davis might at some time, and undoubtedly would, have gained great political prominence, but his absolute beginning in 1860 was due much more to the desire on my part for revenge on somebody else than love for him, and his future much depended on his beginning and how well he began.

The details of the memorable gubernatorial contest, as well as the senatorial contest which relegated Senator Ramsey to private life, will be found recorded in other observations. I prefer to concentrate my modesty in this one chapter, and consequently do not prolong it, and feel that to absolutely forcibly present it, it should be diagrammed:

CAUSE.

The loss of a petty government office.

EFFECT.

Hon. W. D. Washburn lost the opportunity of his life to be Governor of Minnesota.

Hon. Alexander Ramsey lost the opportunity of his life to secure a third term as United States Senator.

Hon. C. K. Davis found the opportunity of his life to be, consecutively, Governor, United States Senator, and achieve world-wide fame.

Little rivulets make the might ocean—when there are enough of them.

C K Davis

121

OBSERVATION NINETEEN.

**How I Discovered Hon. C. K. Davis—The Campaign Inaugurated for Him in 1873,
Which Elected Him Governor.**

For many years after Governor Davis' rise to prominence, prominent newspapers in the state would give me the credit for having discovered him and brought him to the front. This was unquestionably a credit to which I was entitled, and I modestly admit it. At the same time it is only just to say that if I had not, by a fortuitous accident, selected an able man, one who would in every way fill the bill as a politician and rising statesman, the movement would not have been a success. But I purpose demonstrating in this volume the absolute fact as to what I did, and do it so completely and forcibly that neither this nor any future generation will ever dispute it.

With this idea in mind I give somewhat in detail the way the affair was managed, and many extracts from my paper, *The Dispatch*, showing the persistency with which I pressed Governor Davis to the front.

Governor Davis was elected as a representative to the legislature from St. Paul in 1866. He had also written and delivered many times his famous lecture, "Modern Feudalism," which was an argument in favor of placing railroads under legislative control. And, by the way, this doctrine originated in the courts of Minnesota. The citizens of Rochester, Minn., through Mr. Blake, one of their merchants, brought suit against the Winona & St. Peter Railroad to regulate rates. Colonel W. P. Clough, a young attorney at Rochester, took charge of the suit, and, after years of work won his contention in the supreme court at Washington. The interstate commerce and other national and state legislation followed.

Library of Congress

Colonel Clough was only given a 122 pittance for his great work, as it was raised from the people in town meeting style. He removed to St. Paul before the litigation ended, and after he had won was selected as attorney for the Northern Pacific Railroad at a handsome salary. He left that place to accept a higher salary as attorney for and second vice president of the Great Northern road. He is now a resident of New York City and vice president of the Northern Securities Company. Evidently, Colonel Clough is too valuable a man to have lying around loose.

I might allude in passing to an incident which really had no especial bearing on what I did at the time of presenting Mr. Davis for the consideration of the young Republicans. In the winter of 1872—73 Hon. George P. Wilson, afterwards attorney general, was a member of the legislature. He was chairman of the judiciary committee, and, among other things, made a very able report on the "Color of Title" bill. When he had completed presenting it before the legislature and retired to the lobby, Penock Pusey, a gentleman who had occupied positions of prominence at the state capitol, though of a subordinate character, was standing there, and said to Mr. Wilson, "We will have to make you attorney general of the state." That little remark in reality bore a good deal of fruit. Later in the session there was a conference between C. K. Davis, George P. Wilson and Alphonso Barto of Sauk Center, at which it was suggested and agreed among the three that Davis should become a candidate for governor, Barto for lieutenant governor and Mr. Wilson a candidate for attorney general.

Mr. Wilson had been a schoolmate of mine in the East prior to either one of us coming to Minnesota, and our relations were very close and friendly. The result of that conference was that Wilson was delegated by the other gentlemen who were party to it to come and see me as a precautionary measure and advise me of the program. I am free to say that the fact of that conference and the advice had passed from my mind entirely when I began the Davis boom, but being friendly to all the parties in interest I was nothing loth to

Library of Congress

aid in carrying it out, and the plan was literally executed. Davis became governor, Barto lieutenant governor and Wilson attorney general.

123

Perhaps if the slate had been absolutely known, it would have been smashed, but it was not, and with the success of Davis it was not very difficult to carry Barto and Wilson through on the same boom.

With this explanation the story of the beginning of the Davis boom and its being carried to a successful conclusion becomes a matter of historical fact, as well as of general interest to the public.

In 1873 there was a campaign for state offices and incidentally for the United States senator, who was to be elected in the winter of 1875. Horace Austin was serving his second term as governor, and Alexander Ramsey his second term as United States senator. Both were considered candidates to succeed themselves. Austin disclaimed this, but his name was voted on in the convention. He had never really affiliated with the Ramsey wing in politics and the Ramsey men cast about for someone else upon whom they could rely to succeed him. W. D. Washburn, of Minneapolis, was agreed upon, and while he desired the office for himself rather than as a stool pigeon for Ramsey, he was nevertheless allied with the senator's supporters, and the two campaigns of Washburn and Ramsey were thus blended. This left Austin on his own mettle and, to add to the complications, Thomas H. Armstrong of Albert Lea was also an aspirant for governor. That was the situation in the early part of the year 1873.

I was publishing the St. Paul Dispatch at the time, as an independent newspaper, and not at all averse to making mischief and smashing slates. I readily saw that Washburn was the strong candidate for governor and would win against the candidates then in the field, which would mean the election of Ramsey for six years more. Here was a double-headed opportunity to smash something, which I could not resist. No one was consulted or even

Library of Congress

any formal plan outlined in my own mind. C. K. Davis was United States district attorney and recognized as an able young man. He had been delivering his lecture on “Modern Feudalism” about the state, winning a good deal of reputation, and he appeared to me to be the most available candidate to turn the politics of the state topsy turvey. The first allusion I made to Davis in the matter was merely incidental. On the 3rd of March, 1873, an editorial appeared in the Dispatch headed “Candidates for State Offices.” It named all the known Republican candidates and incidentally said this:

C. K. Davis (Modern Feudalism) of St. Paul is also an aspirant, not so much with the expectation of getting the nomination this year, as with the idea of being in training for the future, and also to afford an opportunity for a compromise candidate in case the triangular Austin-Washburn-Armstrong fight should become too hot.

It was early in the campaign and there was really no occasion for much comment. The Dispatch did not again allude to Davis until April 19th. The initial article was then printed which bore the fruit of Senator Davis' political future. I offset the double-headed campaign of Washburn and Ramsey by presenting Davis at one fell swoop as a candidate for governor and senator, and I believe that plump proposition had much to do with securing the first step—the governorship. Here is the original article nominating Davis, and it might be marked for future reference “Exhibit I. B.” (initial boom).

[St. Paul Dispatch, April 19, 1873.]

ANOTHER RICHMOND.

For years immemorial (almost) a set of old fogies have been managing the Republican party in this state. No one outside the sacred circle of the charmed ring is allowed to rise or receive any consideration whatever, and the young men in the party are held down or kept in the background, lest they might supplant the venerable relics of the past in the affections of the people.

This thralldom has become so grievous that a coterie of young and brilliant members of the party have resolved to at least endeavor to break the chains that bind them. The program has, as yet, taken no definite shape, but the more prominent ones desire to center upon Hon. C. K. Davis, of this city, and present his name as a candidate for governor. He has not positively consented, but the prospect seems to be fair that during the blooming month of May he may blossom out as a full grown candidate. In case this should be successful, the young and vigorous element in the party will then push Mr. Davis for the senatorial chair in order to give more of their number chance of promotion.

125

To what extent the revolt will be carried, or how successful it will prove, are problems for the future to solve, but the moss-covered fossils are alarmed, and it is among the possibilities that they may endeavor to appease the impending storm by taking Mr. Davis up themselves, on condition that he will not stand in Ramsey's way for the senate. This would be a shrewd movement, that would be likely to win, though such discretion on the part of the treasury leeches would be remarkable.

There was in the mild suggestion that the Ramsey men had better drop Washburn and join hands with Davis a mere political pointer, but I was too much a political outlaw to have my suggestion heeded by the Ramsey crowd even if they knew it to be good—as they certainly did afterwards.

Mr. Davis was at Brainerd, Minn., when this article appeared, engaged with the late S. M. Flint of St. Paul in trying a murder case. Mr. Flint told me on his return that when the paper reached Brainerd, Davis was dumfounded, and his first impulse was to telegraph me very positively that he would not be a candidate. Flint dissuaded him from doing this on the ground that he was not responsible for the utterances of the Dispatch. I have no doubt he regarded the prospect as hopeless and only inclined to weaken his hold on the United States district attorneyship, which Ramsey could control. The murder trial was quite protracted, but Davis was sufficiently exercised to come down the next Sunday to

Library of Congress

look into the matter. At that time there was no railroad direct from St. Paul to Brainerd, and the journey had to be made via the St. Paul & Duluth to Carleton Junction and thence via the Northern Pacific road to Brainerd. Whatever determination to decline Davis may have started with, when he had taken his long ride and met friends in St. Paul he concluded to return in silence. I am not sure that I even met him—at all events, there was no consultation or plan talked or thought of between us. The Dispatch simply fired away and allowed results to take care of themselves. It was not until April 30th, 11 days later, after the “initial boom,” that the trial ended, and Davis came home to remain. By nothing dates the reader can trace the progress of his boom before his return, which is significant as showing he was not at that time a party to it.

The Dispatch of April 22d contained this editorial paragraph:

126

The third term fellows are both alarmed and excited by the prospective gubernatorial candidacy of the Hon. C. K. Davis. * * * The young Republicans argue that they will have no geographical trouble, for if they succeed in making Hon. C. K. Davis governor they will then make him senator, and the gubernatorial chair will then go outside of St. Paul.

In order to relieve Davis of any responsibility and at the same time give him the opportunity to enter the race gracefully, the following paragraph appeared in the Dispatch April 23d:

The movement of the young Republicans, with the Hon. C. K. Davis at their head, is becoming more and more formidable, and the young Republicans find words of cheer coming from unexpected quarters. Mr. Davis is now absent from the city upon professional business, but upon his return it is confidently predicted he will enter the lists as a gubernatorial candidate. The situation grows interesting.

Not being at all sure that my candidate would stick, I hedged a little with this paragraph on April 24th:

Library of Congress

When the Hon. C. K. Davis returns a strong effort will be made to induce him to decline, but the young Republicans are so much in earnest that it is not believed he will desert them.

Here was a bracer which the Dispatch gave him on April 26th:

From all parts of the state we hear commendations of the young Republican movement and the gubernatorial candidacy of Hon. C. K. Davis. There is no question but the feeling is widespread against the fossil managers of the Republican party in Minnesota. They gobble all the fat, and use the young Republicans to keep them in office. The candidacy of the brilliant Hon. C. K. Davis means a new deal all around.

Davis returned on the evening of April 30th, and this was the welcome the Dispatch supplied him that day, though his coming was unheralded:

The flames which light up the hills these beautiful evenings are the watchfires on the tower of Zion which are lighting the Hon. C. K. Davis in a blaze of glory on his pathway to the gubernatorial and senatorial chairs. Let the young Republicans rally and send the old fogies to eternal smash.

127

On May 1st, the first day after his return, the Dispatch gave him encouragement in these words:

The Hon. C. K. Davis has the gubernatorial game in his own hands. Rarely has the candidacy of a man been received with such favor. The young Republicans call; he must obey.

What I have quoted thus far has been from the editorial utterances of the Dispatch, but that was not all. The "I. B." had begun to work in the country and every day I quoted comments of state papers, printing approvals and disapprovals as well. The recognition

Library of Congress

that it was a Dispatch movement was borne out by these comments. In the Dispatch of April 25th the following quotations appeared:

Lake City Sentinel—The Dispatch announces C. K. Davis as a candidate for the future gubernatorial honors, supported by the young Republicans, who are about to revolt from the old leadership.

Owatonna Journal—The St. Paul Dispatch intimates that an effort is being made to bring C. K. Davis into the field as a candidate for the office of governor.

Minneapolis Times—The St. Paul Dispatch announces that the young Republicans of that city have determined upon Hon. C. K. Davis as a candidate for governor. * * * It is no use. Washburn is the coming man, and the sooner the “young Republicans” make up their minds to submit, the sooner they will be happy.

On April 26th this was reproduced in the Dispatch:

Litchfield News Ledger—Hon. C. K. Davis of St. Paul is spoken of as a candidate for governor. There are lots of folks who could vote for “Cush” with a hearty unction.

In order to keep on a full head of steam the Dispatch of April 29th contained these quoted comments:

Minneapolis News—The St. Paul Dispatch is making a feeble effort to imitate the New York Herald in a small way by proposing and advocating various candidates for official honors. The Dispatch is trying to get up a reputation for journalistic “enterprise” by pursuing the same policy in regard to our state politics. Just now it is presenting the claims of Hon. C. K. Davis of St. Paul to the Republican nomination for governor, putting him forward as the representative of the “young Republicans,” whatever that may mean.

Library of Congress

Rochester Post—Hon. C. K. Davis of St. Paul is said by the Dispatch to be a candidate for governor. He is the most brilliant intellect in the Republican party of the state, and would honor any position he would accept, but there is nothing decisive about a Republican nomination made by the Dispatch.

Le Sueur Sentinel—The Dispatch of St. Paul has started considerable of a movement in favor of Cush. K. Davis for governor, and though we suspect that the Dispatch influence in this instance will not greatly exceed its influence two years ago in favor of “the man with hayseed in his hair,” it may succeed in exciting Davis' ambition to such an extent as to cause something of a row in the Republican camp.

What I have quoted thus far shows the persistence rather than the method with which the boom was worked; the quick response to the suggestion and the general and irrefutable acknowledgment that the entire affair originated in the Dispatch and had no other support at the outset. Mr. Davis was not in the city. I had not exchanged a word with him in advance on the subject, and he was as much astonished as Washburn and Ramsey to see the work of the Dispatch. With the exception of the item of May 1st, all that has been quoted above appeared before Mr. Davis' return, and, in addition, he found numerous letters awaiting him urging him to be a candidate. And then he began to seriously think it would be good politics to accept the situation. And he did.

Possibly some would suppose that when Davis formally took the field he would have done so through the Dispatch. The fact was I only had a moderate personal acquaintance with Davis, and he was evidently afraid that his recognition of an independent paper would injure his party standing. No interview or authorized original statement from Davis on the subject of his candidacy appeared in the Dispatch during the entire campaign. The St. Paul Press was so bound up in Ramsey that he could not have a hearing there, and he accordingly selected the Winona Republican in which to make his official announcement. That paper had not even printed his name as a candidate, but on May 9, 1873, the

Library of Congress

following appeared in its columns, which, for convenience, can be marked "Exhibit D. O. B." (Davis' Own Boom):

Winona Republican, May 9, 1873—In presenting a list of the various candidates for the Republican nomination for governor the other day we omitted the name of C. K. Davis, Esq., of St. Paul, upon the strength of information which led us to believe that he did not seek the nomination, and that the use of his name in that connection was made without his authority. We now learn, however, in a very direct manner, that Mr. Davis does desire to be considered a candidate, and that he formally places himself before the public in that attitude.

Mr. Davis had written a personal letter to Mr. Sinclair, editor of the Republican, telling him he had decided to be a candidate for governor. He had written Sinclair because he was afraid to recognize me as his supporter. But at that time I was after larger game than C. K. Davis and to me he was only a means to an end.

The Winona Republican was entirely correct in its information "that the use of his (Davis') name in that connection was made without his authority." He certainly never authorized me to use it. And still it seemed to have been used prior to the article of May 9th.

One plan I had of attracting attention to the matter was to print all the adverse comments I could find, the more personal they were to the Dispatch the better. On the 5th of May the Dispatch quoted this from the Blue Earth City Post:

"The St. Paul Dispatch is trying to get up a division over C. K. Davis, but it won't amount to much."

On the 9th day of May, 1873, the same date the authoritative announcement was printed in Winona, the Dispatch contained a broadside on Davis, for and against. I quote some of the latter, the headline in every case being the one I made:

SOUND ADVICE FOR C. K. DAVIS. (Willmar Republican.)

If Hon. C. K. Davis has any real idea of running for governor, the first hard work he ought to do is to get the Dispatch to cease supporting him. He couldn't otherwise win.

“POISONED EULOGIUMS” OF THE DISPATCH. (Waseca News.)

What horrid crime has the Hon. C. K. Davis committed that he should be pursued with the poisoned eulogiums of the bastard St. Paul Dispatch. 9

130

THE MEDDLING DISPATCH VERY PROPERLY REBUKED. (Minneapolis News.)

We cannot exactly understand on what principle the St. Paul Dispatch is attempting to meddle, dictate or advise in regard to the Republican nomination next fall. The editor of that paper last fall was a delegate to the Cincinnati convention, and formally took himself out of the Republican party. We now, however, find him mixing as heartily in the discussion within the Republican party in regard to its candidates as if he were a member of the party in good standing. The Dispatch can have, legitimately, no more to say about the Republican nomination than Capt. Jack of the Modocs can have to say about the arrangement of the campaign against him. If the Dispatch comes into our camp it comes as an enemy.

A LIVELY STIR AMONG THE REPUBLICAN MONKEYS. (Le Sueur Sentinel.)

The St. Paul Dispatch may not have the prescience to name the candidate who will receive the nomination for governor at the next Republican state convention, but it has sufficient influence to make a lively stir among the Republican monkeys.

These extracts show that both friends and foes attributed the whole movement to the Dispatch, and also explain why Davis, while he appreciated the work of the paper, as

Library of Congress

he had not sought or asked its support, feared to be too closely identified with it, lest his Republicanism be questioned. As a matter of fact while all this comment was going on Davis was almost afraid to be seen talking with me in public lest his party loyalty should be questioned. This is politics. Just about the date of his official announcement in Winona he dropped into my office one morning and said, "Hall, don't you think you had better treat this matter a little more seriously. I can hardly understand you myself." I assured him that that was the beauty of the campaign, that no one else understood it either but it could not harm him to let the molasses run. I do not recall any other suggestion coming from him during the entire contest. It was a "go as you please."

The allusion of the Le Sueur Sentinel, in quotation given above, to "the man with the hayseed in his hair," referred to a campaign I had run two years previous, advising the Democrats to nominate Amos Coggsell of Owatonna for governor. It did not result as the Sentinel slurringly indicated. The Dispatch made Coggsell known far and near as "the man with hayseed in his hair," and the Democratic convention took the advice and nominated him. He positively declined, but the triumph of the independent newspaper was just as marked. To successfully conduct the campaigns for nominations of two hostile parties is something of an achievement. That is what the Dispatch did, at that time, within the space of two years.

THE CONVENTION WHICH DID THE WORK.

The Republican state convention to nominate candidates for state offices in 1873 met in St. Paul on July 16th. All interest centered in the nomination for governor. The selection of the next United States senator was considered to largely depend upon the gubernatorial result. Prior to C. K. Davis entering the lists, the general feeling was that W. D. Washburn had a walkover. Davis' candidacy had at least modified this sentiment, for, while the Washburn men were very confident, even on the day of the convention, they admitted misgivings and feared that something untoward might happen. They could not really believe that the young Republicans would come to the front, but would have felt

Library of Congress

better if they had not appeared with a candidate. The Davis forces were hopeful rather than confident. The Dispatch of that date, which was issued before the convention had nominated, showed this by printing the following editorial paragraph:

Whatever the result of the convention to-day, the coming man in Minnesota politics bears the initials of Cushman K. Davis.

It proved to be a case of politicians proposing and the convention disposing.

The convention met in the old Grand Opera House, and the usual contest for chairman occurred. W. H. Yale of Winona was nominated as the Washburn representative by D. M. Sabin, and J. Q. Farmer of Fillmore county was presented by the anti-Washburn element. The result showed Yale 166, Farmer 138. This carried great joy to the Washburn camp. The Washburn 132 men felt that they had a complete and easy victory and their final defeat was in part due to relaxing their efforts, owing to over confidence. The Davis forces presented a bold front, but it was evident that the loss of the chairman had a depressing effect.

After the usual preliminaries, which were quite long, the convention, at the afternoon session, reached the naming of candidates. Gen. L. F. Hubbard took the floor and read a letter from Governor Austin, which was in part as follows:

I have not been a candidate for re-election, and there is not a delegate that is here at my instance. I desire that the controversy be confined to the three candidates aspiring to the office, and that I may not be antagonized with them.

Following this, the late F. R. E. Cornell of Minneapolis presented Washburn's name, Governor Marshall of St. Paul naming Davis, and C. T. Benedict of Olmsted county made a speech in behalf of Thomas H. Armstrong of Albert Lea. At the close a delegate arose and nominated Governor Austin in spite of his letter. This was in reality to give some delegates a chance to have a candidate on the side, until they saw how the two leaders,

Library of Congress

Davis and Washburn, stood. Balloting was then ordered, with R. B. Langdon, John B. Sanborn and T. G. Jonsrud as tellers.

On the informal ballot 306 votes were cast, Washburn having 119, Davis 77, Austin 77, and Armstrong 33. The first formal ballot showed 305 votes, Washburn having 128, Davis 78, Austin 68 and Armstrong 30. The next ballot every member of the convention, 308, voted, and it was the only ballot where every vote was cast. Washburn had 144, Davis 106, Austin 26 and Armstrong 32.

The day was warm and the excitement intense as the convention proceeded. Half the delegates stripped off their coats and log-rolling was decidedly animated. The third formal ballot was startling in its clearness, standing Washburn 153, Davis 149, Austin 1, scattering 4. The fourth was the final and decisive ballot. There were 307 votes cast. Necessary to choice, 154. Davis had 155 and Washburn 152. Before the chair could announce the result a wrangle ensued led by Charley Clarke of Minneapolis, and participated in by Maj. Geo. A. Camp. Clarke 133 claimed that there were only 304 delegates and that there had been too many votes cast. General Sanborn contended that Davis had a majority, whether there were 304 or 308, and Clarke, being assured by the secretaries counting the report of the credentials committee and finding 308 and being satisfied that, besides, there had already been 308 votes cast on a previous ballot, Major Camp moved to make Davis' nomination unanimous. The ballot had been challenged once before and the secretaries had reported only 304 in the convention.

The triumph of the young Republicans was so complete, and in a sense better than they expected, that they went fairly wild and when Davis appeared a few minutes later to accept, it was many minutes before the applause could be sufficiently repressed to allow him to proceed. The Washburn supporters were very sore because they had felt sure of success. Besides they were so near victory on the third ballot that defeat was especially hard. It was a great surprise and the fourth ballot changed the face of Minnesota politics from that day to this. A story was circulated that Major Camp had found a Washburn ballot

Library of Congress

in the lining of his hat, which had been used by the tellers to receive the ballots, and there was talk of re-opening the contest, but a moment's thought showed that it would merely have brought the total up to 308, and Davis would still have one majority over Washburn.

At the evening session A. Barto of Sauk Center was nominated for lieutenant governor, S. P. Jennison of Red Wing for secretary of state, Mons Grinager of Freeborn for treasurer and Geo. P. Wilson of Winona for attorney general.

The Democrats nominated Ara Barton of Fairbault, and the vote at the election was Davis 40,741, Barton 35,245, S. Mayall, prohibition, 1,036. Davis' plurality over Barton was 5,496 and his majority over both was 4,460. This was far below the normal Republican majority in the state which at that time ranged from twenty to thirty thousand. The old regime could not forgive Davis for entering the race and there was the fear that his success for governor would be fatal to Ramsey for senator. I have always believed that the mossbacks intended to defeat him outright or make his margin so small that he would come into their camp to protect his political future.

134

For the first time in the history of the state a governor was contented with one term. Governor Davis positively refused to be a candidate again. He was a poor man and his position at the bar gave him an income many times in excess of the governor's salary. His real ambition was to go to the senate, and he could not well make that fight in the winter of 1875, and in the summer, a few months later, ask the nomination for the second term as governor. He accordingly threw his lance into the senatorial target, while serving the second year of his first and only term as governor. His lance was shivered in that onset but Ramsey was defeated as well, and twelve years later Davis reached the senatorial goal.

135

OBSERVATION TWENTY

The Attempt to Re-elect Alexander Ramsey to the Senate for a Third Term.

Library of Congress

The senatorial election in Minnesota in 1875 was the sequel of the candidacy and election of C. K. Davis to the position of governor in 1873. The statement made by the Dispatch in 1873 that Davis was a dual candidate for governor and senator proved a very literal fact, as Senator Ramsey and his friends subsequently learned. As the time for the senatorial contest approached four candidates were developed, to-wit: Senator Ramsey, candidate for a third term; Governor Davis, ex-Governor Austin and W. D. Washburn. There were 83 Republicans in the legislature, and the Ramsey forces thought they had 42 secured, which was just enough, and no more, to give Ramsey the nomination. The Davis men claimed to have 29 positively pledged, and the remainder were supposed to be divided between Washburn and Austin.

The Republican caucus was called to be held in the senate chamber at the capitol on the evening of Jan. 14, 1875. I was exercising a sort of guardian angel care over the Republican party at that time, and vehemently advised the Davis forces, through the columns of the independent Dispatch, not to enter the caucus. They were told that Ramsey men were sent to them to pledge themselves to Davis, for the purpose of getting the Davis forces into the caucus on a false assumption of strength, and that the one way to avoid defeat, or being stigmatized as bolters, was to go into the open legislature and vote, instead of trusting their fortunes to the tricks of the caucus. Good advice is often rejected, and this was one of the cases, as the 136 Davis men afterwards learned to their sorrow. The Davis men decided that they would avoid being tricked by demanding a viva voce vote in the caucus, thus making the 29 pledged men go on record, either as true or false to their promises. The Ramsey forces were in high glee when they found the Davis forces would come into the caucus, and while it did not work just as they expected, by nominating Ramsey, it took 12 years out of the political life of C. K. Davis and by just so much time delayed his reaching the senate.

The eventful caucus night came and every Republican member of the legislature appeared. All of the candidates were on hand to advise with their supporters. Governor

Library of Congress

Davis occupied his executive office; Senator Ramsey was in the state auditor's office; ex-Governor Austin was in the insurance commissioner's room, and Mr. Washburn made his headquarters in the railroad commissioner's office. The respective headquarters were thronged with friends of each of the candidates and the corridors were packed with interested spectators. The caucus assembled in the senate chamber, with closed doors. J. W. Furber of Washington county was chosen chairman, C. B. Bosworth of Goodhue and W. R. Kenyon of Steele were elected clerks with Milo White (Ramsey) of Olmsted, Charles H. Clarke (Washburn) of Hennepin, C. W. Crosby (Davis) of Rock, and S. N. Treadwell (Austin) of Nicollet were tellers. Every candidate had to have a teller, for in a real nice caucus the tellers determine who gets the nomination, instead of the men who cast the votes. On this occasion, in order to be entirely fair, a transparent glass ballot box had been secured besides.

As soon as the organization was completed, Senator E. F. Drake of St. Paul sprung the Ramsey scheme. He offered resolutions providing; First, that the voting for the nomination should be by secret ballot; second, that there should be five ballots, unless a nomination was sooner reached, before the chair should entertain a motion to adjourn, though motions to adjourn, under parliamentary rules, are always in order; third, that the vote on the motion to adjourn should be viva voce by yea and nay roll call.

"Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a king?"

137

I call the scheme clever politics. By having a secret ballot for the nomination, men who had promised Davis could vote for Ramsey and not be detected. And then if the Davis men should want to adjourn, while the Ramsey men did not, there would be plenty of grounds for differences of opinion on that point to excuse the bogus Davis supporters for voting against adjournment, while the Ramsey men, by the roll call on adjournment, would have a chance to spot every one of their pledges. The resolutions or rules offered by Mr. Drake were debated and the Davis men were very strenuous in opposing a secret ballot, some

Library of Congress

even going so far as to declare they would not remain if the ballot was not viva voce. In spite of this loud talk the resolutions finally prevailed and the Davis men had, in real life, accepted the invitation:

“Will you walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly, 'Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy.”

The Ramsey men, having played their big hand and won, were in high glee. When the caucus to nominate Ramsey for the second term was held six years previous, they would not permit an informal ballot, but this time there was greater liberality and it was agreed that the first ballot should be informal. It resulted in giving Ramsey 36, Davis 21, Washburn 15 and Austin 11. Then there was excitement in the Davis ranks. His vote was eight below the promised schedule. They could have kept out of the trap by staying out of the caucus, but they didn't. So there was nothing to do but to proceed to the first formal ballot. That resulted: Ramsey 36, Davis 21, Washburn 14, Austin 12.

Then there was the usual consultation with the chieftains, between ballots, and the second formal ballot was given out: Ramsey 38, Davis 22, Washburn 14, Austin 9.

It was evident that Austin was out of the race, as his vote was disintegrating. Ramsey's gain of two was alarming. He only lacked four votes of a nomination and Austin still had nine shots in his locker to go somewhere. The third formal ballot was then taken amid great excitement and resulted:

Ramsey 40, Davis 20, Washburn 14, Austin 9.

138

And then the volcano burst. Davis had started eight shy of his promises and after gaining one had lost two to Ramsey. Davis needed 22 to nominate and Ramsey only needed 2. There was the hand-writing of defeat on the wall for Davis and the rainbow of hope in the sky for Ramsey. The Davis men felt like the man who, after making a bad break at a

Library of Congress

fashionable party, exclaimed: "Where's my hat? I wish I WAS in hell!" They were already in a "bad fix," as they had become parties to a rule not to adjourn until five ballots had been taken and only three, formal, were yet recorded.

To any one familiar with such contests, it was apparent that if two more ballots were taken Ramsey would win the prize. Heroic measures were demanded and with almost riotous vehemence what was left of the Davis, Washburn and Austin forces (inspired by advice from the outside) demanded an adjournment in spite of the rule adopted. The roll was called under the rule adopted and the motion to adjourn was lost. This demonstrated that the Ramsey forces would get the needed two votes if the caucus held together. And here the Ramsey men blundered. Instead of forcing the fight when the motion to adjourn was defeated, they gave the Davis men a recess of 10 minutes for consultation. It was always my belief that that recess cost Ramsey the senatorship. After consulting with outside friends, the opposition to Ramsey came into the caucus foaming at the mouth. They demanded a viva voce vote or an adjournment and declared that with or without an adjournment they would walk out if another secret ballot was attempted. The Ramsey men knew that with a viva voce vote they could not hold their 40 secret supporters, and rather than concede that and expose their hand, they reluctantly consented to an adjournment until the next night. It was that or the absolute disruption of the caucus. The 10 minutes' recess had given the Davis men a chance to gather their wits and now the Ramsey camp was in gloom.

Just before the informal ballot was taken, a very amusing incident occurred. The caucus being secret, the only tidings the newspapers or outsiders could secure was the mere record of the ballots handed out by the doorkeeper. It was prior to the burning of the old capitol and there were large ventilators in 139 the ceiling of the senate chamber. By going up into the house gallery an entrance could be effected above the ceiling, and by crawling over the joists the ventilators in the senate chamber were reached, from which, with some difficulty, a fair report of the proceedings could be secured. I had two reporters up there, one to hold a candle and identify the speakers while the other took notes, and in this way

Library of Congress

gave a four or five-column report of the caucus, (much of it verbatim) in the next issue of the Dispatch. Prior to the informal ballot the occupant of the senate chamber were startled by a shower of plastering and the sight of a big foot piercing through the ceiling. There were two sergeants-at-arms at the door, the senate sergeant on the inside and the house sergeant on the outside. Members of the caucus rushed to the door and gave hasty instructions to the outside sergeant to arrest the eavesdropper. The sergeant's name was Washington Pierce and as he hailed from Minneapolis he was bound to do or die in the attempt, though he had only a dazed idea of where to find the culprit.

Governor Davis was not excessively pious in those days, and, in order to make sure of something truly good in his administration, he had selected W. L. Wilson of St. Paul as his private secretary. Mr. Wilson was a most exemplary citizen, a pillar in the House of Hope and whether actually a deacon in the church at the time or not, he was styled "Deacon Wilson," especially by the irreverent reporters. Just what the good Deacon was doing in the house gallery at that time I never knew, though I believe he claimed that he, too, was looking for interlopers. At all events, Pierce rushed up to the house gallery and, hearing someone within, ordered him to come out, and in response out stepped Deacon Wilson in utter ignorance of the footprint and the attendant excitement. If Pierce had not been so excited he would have known it would take 15 minutes to crawl over the joists in the darkness and reach the senate ventilators and that the culprits could not possibly have returned to the gallery of the house by the time he (Pierce) reached there. Evidently this was not thought of, for he placed the good Deacon under arrest and had dragged him half way down stairs toward the senate chamber before the Deacon could recover from his astonishment to 140 expostulate. The zealous official was trying to drag him into the caucus to show his feat!! Deacon Wilson finally shook off Pierce's embrace with great indignation and but for his religious scruples would probably have advised him to seek the new railroad station at Jerusalem. Friends quickly came to vouch for and rescue the Deacon and Pierce was told he would be arrested for assault if he persisted, as the caucus had no authority to order anyone's arrest. Meantime the real offender escaped. He

Library of Congress

was a clerk in the adjutant general's office, and his foot had slipped between the joists and perforated the plastering. But the newspapers did not tell this at the time and it went into history as "Deacon Wilson's footprint." A favorite parody about the capitol the next day ran:

Lives of Deacons all remind us, We can make our lives sublime, And departing leave behind us, Footprints on the laths of time.

THE NEXT CAUCUS.

When the Republican caucus to nominate a United States senator adjourned on the evening of Jan. 14, 1875, the party was all at sea, and when the caucus reassembled on the next evening—the 15th—there was no improvement. The caucus was held, as before, in the senate chamber, with closed doors. "Deacon Wilson's footprint" on the ceiling had given the overhead reporters a point of vantage, as they could look through the "footprint" and recognize the speakers easier than by the use of the ventilators. The morning papers contented themselves with what they could pick up on the outside, but the Dispatch had two reporters stationed at the "footprint" and had even a more elaborate report than the night of the first caucus. This was really very fortunate for history, as the only record kept by the secretaries was the actual ballots, while the Dispatch gave a running account of the debates. It was hardly fair to compel reporters to secure valuable history under such difficulties.

141

Fifteen had nerved themselves up to the point of remaining absent from the caucus and the Ramsey men were nervous when the roll call developed that the following good Republicans were not present:

Senators—T. H. Armstrong of Freeborn county, L. F. Hubbard of Goodhue, R. B. Langdon of Hennepin, A. Nelson of Meeker, Knute Nelson of Douglas (present United States senator), A. E. Rice of Kandiyohi.

Library of Congress

Representatives—David Benson of Renville county, George A. Camp of Hennepin, W. P. Dunnington of Wabasha, R. Fitzgerald of Freeborn, J. A. Jackson of Wabasha, N. J. Ottun of Goodhue, L. K. Stone of Swift, Henry Tunnell of Freeborn and J. G. Whittemore of Pope.

Thirteen of these absentees were Davis men and two were supporters of Washburn. When it came to the balloting, from 14 to 17 more who were present refused to vote, making it decidedly a rump caucus. That was just what the opposition to Ramsey proposed it should be.

The first impulse of many was to abandon the caucus after the roll call disclosed the absentees, but Charles A. Gilman of Stearns and E. F. Drake of St. Paul made strong speeches in favor of proceeding as though all was lovely.

Senator C. H. Pettit of Minneapolis (chairman of the state central committee) said if Senator Ramsey's friends insisted on proceeding he was personally prepared to commit political suicide as gracefully as he knew how. He wanted to stand by the caucus, but the nomination of Ramsey would kill the party in Minnesota. To preserve the party organization intact, though desiring the nomination of Washburn, he would consent to take up a new man.

Levi Butler of Minneapolis, another Washburn man, opposed proceeding with the caucus, and C. F. Crosby of Rock county a Davis supporter, spoke in the same vein.

A 10-minute recess followed, for consultation with outsiders, all of which made a bad matter worse.

After the recess, E. P. Freeman of Mankato said he came into the caucus with the full knowledge and consent of Governor Davis, and those who were absent were acting on their own responsibility. Six years ago Senator Ramsey said, in accepting his second

Library of Congress

term, that he had asked the office for the last time, and he thought the word of a United States senator should be sacredly observed.

Charley Clarke, a Ramsey man, and Ingerson, opposition, both of Hennepin county, favored proceeding, but declared that this would be the last caucus they would attend.

The Ramsey men did not do much talking. It was not necessary. In that rump caucus they could carry a vote to adjourn or to go on, as they pleased, and it was only a question as to what they thought was the best policy for them to pursue. They decided to go ahead, but in order to make a showing of fairness proposed to make the first vote informal, though the caucus was taking formal ballots when the adjournment occurred the night before. The informal ballot stood:

Ramsey 37, Washburn 8, McMillan 3, Davis 2, Drake 1.

This showed 51 votes or 32 less than the number of Republicans in the legislature, and as but 15 were reported absent 17 who were present refused to vote, among them being Messrs. Freeman, Crosby and Berry. Then the broken thread of the previous evening was taken up and the fourth formal ballot called for. There were consultations but no open debate, and the fourth formal ballot stood:

Ramsey 38, Washburn 12, Davis 1, McMillan 1, blank 1.

The fifth and last ballot stood: Ramsey 42, Washburn 12; total 54.

If Ramsey could have scored 42 with 83 men in the caucus he would have been a victor, but 42 under the circumstances was like one of Rip Van Winkle's reform drinks, which didn't count that time. Of course it was made unanimous by the 54, the 14 others who were present, but did not vote on the last ballot, sitting in sullen silence.

Senator Ramsey was brought in and returned thanks in a perfunctory manner, but there was neither hilarity nor enthusiasm. The Ramsey men did not know what kind of a prize

Library of Congress

they had gotten and the Davis men did not know where they were at, while Washburn and Austin had gone a-glimmering. The capitol that night was a reflex of the joy which pervaded 143 Mudville the day when "mighty Casey struck out." To add to the ominous character of the occasion these proceedings occurred on Friday.

The Democrats and liberal Republicans had been watching the Republican diversion and doing a good deal of thinking, without committing an overt act. It may surprise those who have become accustomed to consider Minnesota a Republican state to learn that at that time there were 64 members of the legislature who did not subscribe to the Republican faith, and as 1875 was a good deal of an independent year in electing senators in other states, particularly in Wisconsin and Michigan, they were hopeful. A caucus was accordingly called of the opposition to the Republicans to meet in the Merchants' hotel dining room on Monday evening, January 18th, the night before the first vote in the legislature. It was held with closed doors, and a burly policeman was placed at the door in order to have someone authorized to arrest if any one came through the skylight. When the caucus was called to order, I. M. Westfall of Olmsted was elected chairman and E. W. Durant of Stillwater secretary. It was a little odd that in a caucus largely composed of Democrats, the officers should both be Liberal Republicans who had Horace Greeleyized themselves into the Democratic party in 1872. The first move was to order the ballot for a candidate to be viva voce. There was considerable opposition to this, but it finally prevailed. Senator Doughty of Lake City then offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That the members of this caucus pledge themselves individually and collectively, to support said nominee as long as he shall remain the nominee of the party.

Surprising as it may seem, this resolution created a storm. The old line Democrats feared that Ignatius Donnelly might be the nominee and they did not want to pledge themselves to him. Donnelly was a member of the senate and present at the caucus, and this resolution had been offered by a liberal Republican friend of his. Senator Michael Doran of Le Sueur, J. L. MacDonald of Shakopee, L. L. Baxter of Fergus Falls, and others favored

Library of Congress

the resolution, while Senator W. P. Murray of St. Paul, Berry and a good many others declared they did not want to be bound by the caucus. After a long and bitter debate the resolution was voted down, which made the caucus an anomaly. No one was in the least degree bound to abide by the decision. There were 51 present out of a possible 64, and Senator Murray proposed that for the purposes of the caucus the opposition to the Republicans be placed at 58 and that 30 nominate a candidate. This peculiar motion was carried, though in the balloting in the legislature 64 votes were uniformly cast against the Republicans.

When it came to nominating candidates, Messrs. Murray, Baxter and Berry advocated nominating no one but an oldline Democrat, while Westfall, the chairman, thought the liberal Republicans ought to have a chance, and paralyzed the caucus by declaring that he never voted a Democratic ticket in his life up to that date. Donnelly was among those named in the speeches and the informal ballot was thus recorded:

Donnelly 21, Wm. Lochren of Minneapolis 8, Edmund Rice of St. Paul 7, E. M. Wilson of Minneapolis 4, M. J. Severance of Le Sueur 3, H. H. Sibley of St. Paul 2, H. M. Rice of St. Paul 1. Only 46 of the 51 present had voted.

On the first formal ballot Donnelly received 27, and on the second (and last) formal ballot the vote was: Donnelly 30, E. Rice 6, Lochren 8, Wilson 1.

Mr. Murray's accommodating resolution of allowing 30 to nominate had accomplished just what he wanted to prevent, the nomination of Donnelly. If Donnelly had needed a majority of 64, with only 46 voting, he might have failed. It was evidently Murray's fear, when he made his motion, that a majority of all those present would be allowed to nominate, and as there were only 51 present by extending it to a majority of 58 he thought he would thus place it beyond Donnelly's reach. But he didn't. It was made unanimous, and Donnelly, who had retired during the balloting, was brought in and made the usual acceptance speech, declaring if all the opposition would stand by him he could be elected. The whole

Library of Congress

fight of the old mossback Democrats had been directed at Donnelly, and they were enraged at his success. The failure to pass Doughty's resolution left them free to swear, and they did in a manner which would have made "our army in Flanders" turn green with envy. The Pioneer, 145 then a Democratic organ, came out with a column editorial the next morning blistering and denouncing Donnelly.

Thus the two great parties were drawn up in battle array on the morning of Jan. 19, 1875, the day the real fight was to begin by a vote in the legislature. Instead of each presenting an unbroken front, neither one could be said to have a reliable skirmish line.

THE REAL THING.

The 19th of January, 1875, was the date when the Minnesota legislature was required to vote for a senator in the separate branches of the legislature. In compliance with this the senate cast this vote:

Ramsey 18

Donnelly 12

Davis 8

Washburn 1

Buckham 1

Total 41

In explaining his vote Senator Knute Nelson said he was for Davis, but having gone into the caucus he felt bound by it and would vote for Ramsey. I think Senator Nelson must have referred to the first caucus night, as all three of the daily papers agree in reporting

Library of Congress

him absent the night of the second or adjourned caucus. Senators Freeman, Hubbard and Rice voted for Davis, as did Coggsell (Dem.) and McGovern (Dem.).

In the house the vote stood:

Ramsey 42

Donnelly 41

Davis 16

Gilman 3

Andrews 1

Lochren 1

Washburn 1

Sibley 1

Total 106

Aggregating the votes of the two houses, Ramsey received 60, Davis 24, Donnelly 53, and the remainder scattering. That was the initial day in the legislature, and few foresaw the protracted struggle which was to follow. 10

146

The next day, January 20th, the second vote, but the first in joint session, was taken. It was:

Ramsey 61

Donnelly 51

Library of Congress

Davis 24

Sibley 3

Austin 1

Scattering 7

Total vote cast, 147; necessary to a choice, 74. The joint convention was content with one ballot and speedily adjourned.

On the next day, January 21st, an event of interest occurred, when the third ballot was taken. There was some absenteeism and Ramsey had 58, Donnelly 52, Davis 24, Washburn 4, and remainder scattering.

When Senator Petit's name was called he arose to explain his vote. He said he had heretofore supported the regular nominee of the Republican caucus, but for reasons that it was unnecessary to publicly explain, he no longer felt in duty bound to vote for that person, and therefore named for his choice S. J. R. McMillan. This was the first presentation of McMillan's name, and with the exception of the next day McMillan was voted for upon every ballot until the contest closed. Loren Fletcher of Minneapolis had voted for C. C. Andrews from the start up to that time, but his boom did not materialize.

Mr. Petit's speech and vote attracted a good deal of attention and created no end of questions as to what had happened to move such a stalwart party man. The matter was not helped or cleared up in the least when the Press, Ramsey's organ, came out the next morning with an onslaught on Petit, which was in part as follows:

"It is sufficient to say that a gentleman who left the city yesterday has been urgently telegraphed for by Senator Ramsey and his friends, to make his appearance to-day and explain his connection with an accommodating arrangement to supply Mr. Petit

Library of Congress

with a pretext for opposing Senator Ramsey, for which the chairman of the state central committee has long been keenly searching, and for kindly volunteering to place the pretended evidence of corruption, for which he has been so long on the lookout, right under Mr. Petit's inquisitive nose."

147

In the joint session of the 22d Mr. Petit arose to a question of personal privilege and replied to the Press, concluding by voting for Washburn. But still he did not explain what all the talk was about. The ballot was an exact counterpart of the day previous, save in some changes among the scattering. An adjournment over Sunday and until the 26th of January followed.

When the joint convention re-assembled on the 26th, the explosion came, and the mystery was divulged. Senator Hubbard, referring to reports of attempted bribery which had, by innuendo, at least, crept into print, called for the facts.

In response Representative Ingerson of Maple Plaine, Hennepin county, said the position was one very embarrassing to him. He could now only say that the reports which have appeared in the papers have some basis in fact. A bribe of \$500 to vote for Senator Ramsey was offered him in the billiard room of the Metropolitan Hotel, and the offer was subsequently repeated to him on the street.

W. P. Murray—Will the gentleman state the name of the person who attempted to bribe him?

Mr. Ingerson—I do not know, except I was told his name was Dike.

On the vote which followed Ramsey dropped to 50 from 58 the day before and Donnelly also had 50. McMillan had two votes on the fifth ballot, which were cast by Finseth and Berg. Thereafter there was no ballot without his (McMillan's) name appearing with a few votes.

Library of Congress

On the next day, January 27th, Ingerson moved the appointment of an investigating committee to ascertain the truth of his charges, and J. W. Furber of Washington county, C. F. Crosby of Rock county, both Republicans, and Frank L. Morse, Democrat, of Minneapolis, were appointed. The story was that Major W. H. Dike of Faribault had made the offer to Mr. Ingerson of \$500 if he would vote for Ramsey. Ingerson testified that Dike proposed putting the money under a stone on Third street, where he could go and find it, but said the major did not specify the stone. The major was greatly exercised over the charge and employed Judge Flandrau to appear as his attorney before the committee. Dike's story was that he said to Ingerson 148 in the hotel that he would give \$500 if Ramsey was elected, so that he could go home, but not intending to intimate that he would pay Ingerson for his vote. Later Dike and General LeDuc were going across the street to get a glass of beer, and Ingerson happened to come along and was invited to join them, which he did. In the beer hall the major repeated that he would give \$500 if he could go home, knowing that Ramsey was safely elected. General LeDuc corroborated Major Dike in his statement, declaring no offer of money was made. There was no evidence to connect Ramsey, personally, with the matter, and to read the evidence calmly, after the lapse of 30 years, it looks like a very thin charges. But things were sizzling hot at that time, and the two Republican members of the committee brought in a report on February 4th, submitting the testimony without giving an opinion or making any recommendation, while the Democratic member, Frank Morse, submitted a minority report, declaring that Ingerson had sustained his charges. A peculiar feature of the affair was that, following the double report, Crosby, who had joined in the majority report, submitted a resolution that the charges were sustained by the evidence, and asked to have the resolution made the special order for the afternoon of the 9th of February. The house adjourned over that day, and the whole matter appears to have been dropped by common consent. There were two other alleged attempts at bribery referred to the same committee, one being the promise of an office and the other of \$1,000, but the committee reported that the charges were not sustained, and, as usual, the cases were soon forgotten. One of the charges was that Sumner Chase had offered Representative Bosworth money to vote for Davis. This was

Library of Congress

gotten up as a counter irritant for the Ingerson-Dike affair, but the committee unanimously and emphatically declared that there was no evidence of such an occurrence.

On Jan. 28th the Democrats changed front. The hardshells in and out of the legislature had persistently kicked against Donnelly's candidacy because he was not ushered into the world with a Democratic birthmark branded on his forehead. They held a caucus every evening at the Merchants, chiefly to see how 149 to get rid of Donnelly, rather than to determine how to elect a senator. Donnelly had been voted for six times, but at no time received over 53 votes out of the 64 opposition members. At the caucus on the evening of the 27th he sent a letter withdrawing his name, saying that five Democrats had voted steadily for Davis, one for Ramsey, and the others had changed about simply to throw away their votes. He stated that if he could have secured his 64 party votes, he thought the remaining 10 would have been found and he would have been elected. His declination was accepted quick, and an informal ballot taken for his successor, which resulted in William Lochren (now U. S. district judge) of Minneapolis, having 19 votes and Edmund Rice of St. Paul 17. At this point Donnelly put on his war paint. He held Rice, or his friends, responsible for his own defeat, and he served notice on the Democrats that he would oppose Rice openly in the legislature. The result was on the next and formal ballot Lochren had 41 to 3 for Rice. Previous to this a proposition to turn in and elect Davis had been made, but met with no favor. Consequently, on the 28th, the Democrats voted for Lochren, but he only received 55 votes, and Ramsey had the same.

On January 29th Knute Nelson left Ramsey and voted for McMillan. On the 1st of February Ingerson came over to McMillan, and on the 4th of February McMillan had 6. This did not attract any particular attention, as the members were merely throwing away their votes to kill time, being compelled to take at least one ballot every day. One day Sam Nichols, the clerk of the house, received six votes. Ramsey's vote ran down to 44, and Davis ran up 32. In this dilemma the Ramsey men appointed Messrs. McKusick, Drake, Bosworth, Anderson and Egan a committee to confer with the Davis forces, and the Davis men

Library of Congress

appointed Messrs. Freeman, Hubbard and Armstrong to act for them. On February 4th the Ramsey men submitted two propositions. The first was:

Resolved, That all Republican members of the legislature meet for consultation to see if we can agree upon a candidate for United States senator in case it shall hereafter be decided to withdraw both Mr. Ramsey and Governor Davis from the canvass as candidates by their respective friends.

150

If this was rejected the Ramsey committee offered the following:

Resolved, That both Senator Ramsey and Governor Davis shall be simultaneously withdrawn from the canvass as candidates for the United States senate and all the Republican members of the legislature shall vote in joint convention for Republican candidates other than Ramsey and Davis until we elect a Republican.

These propositions were plump acknowledgment of Ramsey's defeat, while the Davis men still had hope, though, at that time, there was not much reason for hope. The Davis men at first made no reply, and on February 10th the Ramsey committee renewed the same propositions, the Davis committee replying that they would accept the first resolution.

As a result of the committee correspondence, another Republican caucus was held at the Metropolitan hotel on the night of February 11th, with Levi Butler of Minneapolis as chairman and C. F. Crosby secretary. Having gotten the caucus together on the first proposition, the Ramsey people endeavored to spring the second on the same theory as the fox, who lost his tail in a trap wanted all the foxes to amputate their caudal appendages. Ramsey was defeated sure, and they wanted to be certain his antagonist was buried with him in a common grave. The motion to withdraw both Ramsey and Davis was lost by two votes, and then the caucus proceeded to act on the first proposition by taking three ballots, just for fun, to see who they would favor if the two leaders were out of the way. To show the hopeless diversity of opinion, and also to show that McMillan was

Library of Congress

not seriously considered up to that time, I give the “three ballots for fun,” which were as follows:

1st 2d 3d Ballot. Ballot. Ballot. W. D. Washburn 14 20 26 G. E. Cole 10 20 26 T. S. Buckham 6 3 1 H. C. Wait 4 7 3 J. S. Pillsbury 5 6 5 Horace Austin 3 2 3 S. J. R. McMillan 4 2 1 E. F. Drake 0 3 3 C. A. Gilman 0 0 5 151

While this caucus adjourned without immediate results, it bore fruit, for two days later, on February 13th, L. F. Hubbard withdrew the name of Davis, and E. F. Drake withdrew the name of Ramsey. This result was inevitable from the time the Ramsey men gave the Davis men 10 minutes' recess the night of the first caucus, but it took them nearly a month to find it out. The Republicans brought out Washburn and Austin again, but Gordon E. Cole of Faribault divided the honors with them. Previous to February 13th there had only been one ballot taken each day, but on that date and the two successive days there were three ballots each day. They were trying to “get together.” The ballots on the 13th, which followed the withdrawal of Ramsey and Davis, were:

1st 2d 3d Ballot. Ballot. Ballot. Lochren (Dem.) 64 64 63 Cole (Rep.) 29 28 35 Washburn (Rep.) 27 27 31 Austin (Rep.) 10 8 4 McMillan (Rep.) 9 7 2 S. P. Child (Rep.) 0 6 0 Scattering 12 7 0

The balloting ran along in this scattering manner for four days more, and on February 17th, the day before his boom began, McMillan had but two votes on the twenty-seventh ballot, though he had had as high as nine on a ballot some days previous. When the joint convention met February 18th Colonel Graves of Duluth withdrew Washburn's name and started a boom for McMillan. Four ballots were taken that day, McMillan having 30, 45, 48 and 57 votes in the order named. During the adjournment the Republicans kissed and made up, and on the first and only ballot, on Feb. 19, 1875, McMillan received 82 votes, and was declared elected United States senator for six years.

Representative Finseth of Goodhue county has been given the credit of discovering McMillan, and constantly adhering to his fortunes until election. The truth of history compels the statement that this is an error. C. H. Petit of Minneapolis developed McMillan

Library of Congress

on the third ballot. Finseth did not vote for him until the fifth ballot, and, while on every ballot thereafter 152 McMillan had one or more votes until the boom came, Finseth voted for Washburn and Hubbard a number of times, and was by no means a steadfast adherent to the successful man. And still he was lionized at the time as the man who made the senator.

The first ballot was taken on January 19th and the last on February 19th. The legislature was in session during this time 23 days, and in all 32 ballots were taken. On three days there were three ballots each day and one day four. All the other days only one ballot was taken. Ramsey and Davis were in the field for 17 ballots, and this is the record of their votes:

Ramsey—60, 61, 58, 58, 50, 55, 55, 47, 44, 46, 44, 44, 43, 42, 44, 44, 52.

Davis—24, 24, 24, 24, 22, 23, 23, 22, 23, 23, 27, 28, 32, 30, 29, 33, 33.

There was evidently a lingering hope that Ramsey might be resuscitated, for on three of the ballots on the 18th of February he was voted for, receiving 4, 6 and 5 votes, respectively.

McMillan was voted for on 29 ballots, his record being:

McMillan—1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 6, 5, 7, 8, 8, 5, 9, 7, 2, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 30, 45, 48, 57, 82.

Donnelly was voted for 16 times, receiving 53, 51, 52, 52, 50 and 49.

Lochren was voted for on 26 ballots, starting at 55, running as low as 45, and only receiving 64 votes, the full strength of his party, on six ballots. On the final ballot he had but 61.

Of the 60 who voted for Ramsey on the first ballot 59 voted for McMillan and one for Cole on the last ballot. That accounts for the one shortage, as 83 was the full Republican

Library of Congress

strength. Every Republican who voted for Davis on the first ballot voted for McMillan on the last. Some prophetic soul cast one vote for Knute Nelson on February 15th. He can be classed as having jumped Governor Clough's claim as the original Nelson boomer.

While Governor Davis was then recognized as a brilliant and coming man, it was not either his or Ramsey's personality which caused the bitter fight. The Ramsey men were the ones who had taken charge of the party affairs from the time the Republican party was organized in Minnesota. The Davis men were 153 composed of the younger working men of the party, and, while admirers of Davis, they fought for him as they did for the purpose of overturning a factional and tyrannical dynasty in the party. And, though Davis personally lost, his cause won.

On Feb. 19, 1875, the morning after Judge S. J. R. McMillan was elected to the United States senate, the St. Paul Press, which was an ardent friend of Senator Ramsey's, made this comment:

The Republican party is to all intents and purposes dead—so dead as to be unable to preserve even the forms of organization—and this being the case, we don't see but that Judge McMillan will do as well as any one who can be chosen to bury the corpse and administer the estate.

Mr. Wheelock, editor of the Press, was postmaster of St. Paul at this time by the grace of Ramsey, and I do not blame him for thinking the Republican party was dead. There have been times when I have had that opinion, or at least have been in doubt whether it was the Republican party or myself that was dead.

Senator McMillan took his seat March 6, 1875, and on March 17, 1875, the following special telegram was sent from Washington to the Minneapolis Tribune:

The question of a change of postmaster at St. Paul was left to Senator McMillan's decision, although both the president and the postmaster general strongly advised against

Library of Congress

any change. McMillan has recommended Dr. Day for Wheelock's place, and will probably insist on his appointment.

Mr. Wheelock, the editor of the Press, took the position of postmaster May 17, 1870, and at the expiration of four years was reappointed. He had consequently served less than a year on his second term when he announced the death of the Republican party, because Ramsey was defeated, and appointed Senator McMillan administrator. Later Mr. Wheelock wrote the president a very able letter advocating civil service, but that dogma had not taken very deep root, and in discharging his duties as administrator Senator McMillan still insisted on Wheelock's removal. The result was that July 1, 1875, Dr. Day, who had been appointed in June, became postmaster of St. Paul and held the office 12½ years, which was six months longer than Senator McMillan's two terms. Mr. Wheelock's item of Feb. 19, 1875, and Dr. Day's commission as postmaster July 1, 1875, might be handed down to history as an object lesson entitled, "Results from natural causes."

In taking this action Senator McMillan proved himself a poor politician. A good many people have differed with Mr. Wheelock during his long editorial career, but no one who ever knew him would expect he would be influenced in his editorial work by a postoffice. And still it would be only human for him to be a little more tender towards Senator McMillan if he (Wheelock) had been made his (McMillan's) appointee as postmaster. I must admit that I helped the cause along by almost daily tantalizing the senator in the Dispatch, with the assurance that the Republican party, being dead, he could not infuse sufficient life into the corpse to remove Wheelock. But he did and made a political mistake in so doing.

155

OBSERVATION TWENTY-ONE.

A Bad Mistake Which Bore Fruit.

Library of Congress

It pains me to be compelled, in the interest of morality, to say that I have heard of lies being told during political campaigns—yes, absolute lies. I suppose that this is due to the excited and animated condition of the cerebellum, which causes the lymphatic nerves to engage in entangling alliances, out of which obfuscation, the generating element of prevarication, is stimulated into being. I should regret if this explanation should produce unhappiness, but it really is the part of prudence to know the worst and be prepared for the best.

A literal illustration of this peculiar phenomena came to ex-Lieutenant Governor Rice of Willmar, a few years ago, and incidentally it reached ex-Senator Ramsey, and, striking that portion of the anatomy known as the neck, aided in making him an ex. It was in 1874 when Mr. Rice was nominated for state senator in the district composed of Chippewa, Swift and Kandiyohi counties. Mr. Rice was ill with typhoid fever and came to Minneapolis for treatment. While in his sick bed he received a letter from J. W. Burdick of Willmar, one of his warm friends, saying that Senator Ramsey, who was a candidate for re-election at the next session of the legislature, had sent a man named Farnsworth up into the district to bring out a Republican candidate against him. This was rendered the more emphatic by the statement that the Ramsey emissary declared his readiness and ability to expend \$2,000 if necessary to defeat Rice. This news made Rice almost mad enough to get well, but, in spite of his wrath, his recovery was delayed, and he remained at Minneapolis during the canvass. He was wholly at a loss to account for this 156 Ramsey hostility, and too ill to investigate. He was gratified to find, in the end, that neither Republican nor Democrat appeared against him, and his election was unanimous. But he did not feel grateful just because the Ramsey men, as he supposed, could find no one to take the field.

When Mr. Rice came down to St. Paul in January, 1875, the senatorial fight was on. One of his early acquaintances was Judge R. F. Crowell, a Chesterfieldian politician of the suaviter in modo school. The judge was Ramsey's private secretary, and, naturally, in the center of the Ramsey camp. He approached Mr. Rice with the grace for which he was so

Library of Congress

distinguished, and invited him to drop in at the Ramsey headquarters. Rice was boiling over with indignation over the attempt of Ramsey to bring out a candidate against him, and the supposed fact that he also desired to expend \$2,000 to secure his defeat. It was an insult, he thought, for Ramsey to expect any aid from him. He could scarcely be civil to the judge, and assured him, in language which had no uncertain meaning, that he (Rice) did not propose to have anything to do with Ramsey, but would work most earnestly to elect another man. Judge Crowell, who was a quiet and one of the best natured men in the world and a thorough gentleman, expressed his sorrow at Rice's attitude, but made no further effort to secure his vote. Rice went into the camp of the hostiles, was one of the warmest supporters of C. K. Davis while he was a candidate, and one of the most unrelenting foes of Ramsey until the crown was placed on Judge McMillan's head.

At this time Rice had not explained his grievance, but simply nursed his wrath. When it was all over, and Ramsey was defeated, he chanced to meet Farnsworth and took him to task for aiding the Ramsey scheme to defeat him. It almost paralyzed him to be informed by Farnsworth that that was the first he (Farnsworth) had heard of the matter; that he had not been sent or gone into the district to disturb him in the least. It was now Rice's turn to be a little sorry for having fought a man under a misapprehension. He took his friend Burdick to task, but without satisfaction, and no reason was ever developed to show why he set afloat that tale of woe. Ramsey and Rice were members 157 of the centennial commission in charge of Minnesota's exhibit at the Centennial at Philadelphia in 1876, and Rice, having done what he could to transform the senator into a political cadaver, thought he ought to explain, which he did. The result was he also learned from the ex-senator's own lips that the story was a romance from start to finish. The mistake could never be rectified. The explanations came too late. Politically, "Ramsey had fought his last battle, and no sound could awake him to glory again." The cerebellum was out of whack in 1874, and the climate at Willmar was too frigid to propagate cherry trees.

OBSERVATION TWENTY-TWO.

John S. Pillsbury's First Election as Governor.

John S. Pillsbury's original selection as a candidate for governor came easy. He is the only man who thus far has held the office for three terms. It was July 28, 1875, when the Republican state convention met in St. Paul which named him. The era of big conventions had not dawned, and the delegation was based on one for each organized county and one for every 400 Republican votes. This made a convention of 194. The late Dr. J. H. Stewart of St. Paul and ex-Gov. Horace Austin were also candidates, and the contest developed one of the most peculiar combinations ever seen in the state. Dr. Stewart had been the life-long supported of Ramsey and had been in position, while mayor of St. Paul, to render some especially valuable services, but still Ramsey (then ex-senator) supported Pillsbury in that contest. Stranger still, Senator McMillan, who had defeated Ramsey a few months previous and had not been backward in going forward into the anti-Ramsey camp, was also a supporter of Pillsbury. Mr. Windom, who was then senator, also supported Pillsbury, but this was not surprising, as Windom and Pillsbury had always worked in harmony. But the whole combination was an illustration that oil and water will sometimes mix. H. B. Strait and M. H. Dunnell, both members of Congress at that time, supported Austin, while Dr. Stewart was "backed by the delegates from 16 counties," as Col. C. H. Graves of Duluth eloquently announced when presenting his name, but his own (Ramsey) county was not one of the 16, though it was claimed for him. The county convention refused to instruct for him, and the delegation was apparently organized on the modern 159 plan by being in favor of Stewart when it became certain that Pillsbury could not get it.

The convention was not exciting, and easily organized with Hon. D. M. Sabin for chairman. Ramsey county had six votes and Hennepin 11, which seems small now. But county conventions are now larger in point of numbers than was that state gathering. There was very little eloquence wasted in nominating speeches. W. H. Yale of Winona presented Pillsbury's name, William Knight of St. Peter presented Austin's, and Colonel Graves of

Library of Congress

Duluth Dr. Stewart's. The entire presentation speeches did not occupy more than ten minutes. Pillsbury was also nominated on the informal ballot, the vote standing: Pillsbury 96, Austin 58, Stewart 41. The first formal ballot did the business by giving Pillsbury 107 to 55 for Austin and 34 for Stewart. Colonel Graves announced that the "sixteen counties" had changed their minds, and were now ready to make it unanimous. Three terms followed for John S. Pillsbury, and there was even talk of a fourth, but lest there should be too much of a good thing, that was not pressed.

The most notable thing about this 1875 convention was the general new deal which was inaugurated. Lieutenant Governor Barto had served but one term, but J. B. Wakefield of Faribault county was named to succeed him. E. W. Dike had had only one term and a fraction, as state treasurer, but he was turned down in favor of the Germans, and William Pfaender of New Ulm was chosen. J. S. Irgens of Mower county kept up the Scandinavian succession and followed General Jennison as secretary of state, but Jennison had held two terms. Sam Nichols of Fergus Falls appeared on earth for the first time, supplanting Sherwood Hough as clerk of the supreme court. Sam remained on earth quite prominently in the Republican councils until he went West to grow up with the country. George P. Wilson, as attorney general, and O. P. Whitcomb, as auditor, were the only ones allowed to succeed themselves, and in each case it was the conventional second term which was granted. The election was merely the usual ratification meeting.

160

OBSERVATION TWENTY-THREE.

Donnelly's Campaign for Congress as a Democrat.

The change of men and measures in politics is something past finding out. The Second District congressional campaign in Minnesota in 1870 affords an apt illustration of this statement. In 1868 there had been a split in the Republican party in the district, Ignatius Donnelly being one of the Republican nominees, and Gen. C. C. Andrews the other,

Library of Congress

the result being the election of a Democrat to Congress. In that campaign Gen. John T. Averill was the fast friend and ardent supporter of Donnelly; in fact one of the very foremost leaders in that branch of the campaign. In the early summer of 1870 there was a good deal of tariff agitation, and Mr. Donnelly made a speech at St. Paul and also at Farmington favoring a tariff for revenue only. While this may sound a little Democratic at the present time, it was really in accord with the Republican sentiment then existing. At first Mr. Donnelly planned to be a candidate before the Republican convention for the congressional nomination on his tariff platform. General Averill had taken the field for the nomination, and felt that, in view of his effort in 1868 for Donnelly, he should have Donnelly's support. This was utterly out of the question, however, and for a time the only question was whether Averill should measure swords with Donnelly in the convention itself or at the polls. Mr. Donnelly finally decided not to enter the Republican convention, and, consequently, when that assembled on the 1st of September, no name but General Averill's was offered, and he was unanimously nominated.

The great point of the Republican convention was to beat Donnelly at his own game on the tariff question, and the following 161 excerpts from the platform were relied upon to do the business:

Resolved , That we expect and demand the cordial co-operation of Congress and the executive in all measures for a still further retrenchment and reform in every branch of the public service, and for the reduction of taxation and the tariff to the lowest limits consistent with the imperative revenue necessities of the government.

Resolved , That, as the revenues necessary to the support of the government and the maintenance of the public credit must be largely derived from duties on foreign fabrics, a justly discriminating tariff for revenue should satisfy the legitimate demands of the business and industrial interests of the country, and that duties should not be imposed to the detriment of the people for the benefit of private interests or monopolies, and we

Library of Congress

demand that, so far as possible, the necessities of life and industry be placed upon the free list.

I was publishing the St. Paul Dispatch at that time, and, in order to show that the Republicans were more opposed to protection than the Democrats, quoted the tariff planks in parallel columns, with the tariff plank of the national Democratic platform of 1866. This was the Democratic plank:

Tariff for revenue and such equal taxation under the internal revenue laws as will afford incidental protection to domestic manufacturers as well, without impairing the revenue and impose the least burden upon and best promote and encourage the great interests of the country.

The words differed but little in the platforms, and the principles were identical, if such a term as principle can be applied to any political platform.

It is interesting to quote these old platforms as showing the changes, progressive and retrograde, which political parties have made in the past quarter of a century; in fact, tariff planks and all other planks in party conventions are made to catch the votes at the time, so that but little reliance can be placed upon them or their sincerity.

When the Democratic congressional convention was called to meet in St. Paul, September 15th, Mr. Donnelly decided, at the request of some of his old-time Republican supporters of '68, to be a candidate for Congress against General Averill. There 11 162 probably was never a greater display of political ingratitude than this act, but that cuts no figure when a man is out for an office.

The critical point now was to prevent the Democrats making any nomination. It was not regarded prudent to make Donnelly the absolute Democratic nominee lest it should alienate Republican votes, and so the plan was devised of endorsing his independent candidacy without formally nominating him. In this scheme Samuel Mayall, who had been

Library of Congress

so important a factor in defeating Donnelly in '68, took the lead, and probably it was owing more to his efforts than to those of any other man that the scheme succeeded.

The Democratic convention was called to order by William Lochren, now judge of the United States District Court. W. W. Phelps of Red Wing was made temporary chairman, succeeded later by General Sibley as permanent presiding officer. Eugene Wilson, Democrat, who had slipped in through the split in 1868, wrote a letter declining to be a candidate for the second term, and Mayall's platform worked to perfection. The Democrats resolved that in view of the overwhelming majority in the district they would recommend their party to support Mr. Donnelly's independent candidacy because he was "sound on that tariff." This, too, in the face of the claim of the Republican Dispatch that Averill was a lower tariff man than Donnelly.

The evening of the day of the Democratic convention a mass meeting was held in Ingersoll hall, St. Paul, to ratify Mr. Donnelly's candidacy. To avoid giving it the air of a Democratic gathering, Samuel Mayall, Republican, presided, and a long list of Republican vice presidents was made up. Donnelly made his usual entertaining speech. Here is one passage:

I ask you to give me your endorsement to say to the world that Elihu Washburn is a liar and a knave. I plant myself on the platform of Ignatius Donnelly. I appeal to the grand jury of the people, and the 6,000 majority I expect in this district will justify that appeal.

Here is another passage:

The issue in this canvass is Bill King, and the question to solve is whether the people own the state, or whether Bill King owns it.

Donnelly evidently felt that some explanation was due, owing to his being in opposition to his former friend, General Averill, 163 and he stated that Averill had opposed him when he wanted to be governor the year previous, and they had not since been friends.

Library of Congress

John M. Gilman and ex-Governor Gorman, simon pure Democrats, made the concluding speeches, giving a Democratic tinge to the meeting. The Pioneer was at that time the Democratic organ of the state, and, while it did not absolutely oppose Donnelly, it damned him with faint praise. In fact the greater portion of the campaign it ignored him altogether, and devoted its energies to an occasional shot at Averill, but chiefly to a war on Windom, who was supposed to be a candidate for the senate.

The St. Anthony Democrat was especially rock-rooted in its political faith, and Ovid Pinney, the editor, was so overcome with the situation that he published a three-column paragraph valedictory and retired from the paper. This was a sentence in his paragraph:

Donnelly is to be buried so deep that no resurrection trump will ever reach him, and the Democracy of the district will enjoy the poor satisfaction of shedding their fruitless tears over his dishonored grave.

As the only claim Donnelly had for Republican votes was that he was anti-protection, while Averill could beat him on this issue and prove it by the Republican platform, there seemed no reason for a Republican defection, and still there was considerable probability of that, owing to the previous brilliant campaign made by Donnelly.

Donnelly had been especially strong in Ramsey county, but even with the aid of the Democratic vote he only carried it by 152 majority. There were at that time but two congressional districts in the state, and the Second district contained 34 counties, making an enormous territory to cover in a canvass. At the conclusion the official figures stood:

Averill 17,183

Donnelly 14,491

Averill's majority 2,692

Two years later Averill was re-elected by over 6,000 majority over George L. Becker, straight Democratic candidate, which shows that Donnelly made some break in the Republican ranks.

164

OBSERVATION TWENTY-FOUR.

Putting on the Garb of Statehood.

When the opportunity for statehood came, Minnesota was not slow in her movements to accelerate the event. The constitution proposed for the state was adopted in October, 1857, and the legislature and state officers were elected at the same time. It was absolutely impossible for the territory to undergo the transition process without the act of admission by Congress, although the preliminary steps had been duly authorized. As that body did not meet until in December, nothing could be hoped for before that period. The assumed state legislature met on Dec. 2, 1857, which was in advance of the session of Congress, and consequently it was not in reality a state legislature, and its acts were in no sense legal or obligatory, except by the common consent of the people. H. H. Sibley and Alexander Ramsey had been voted for for governor at the time the constitution was adopted, but the election was close and slow in being returned, and when the legislature met the board provided by the constitution had not canvassed the votes. Samuel McDary was the territorial governor, and somebody else was the governor-elect of the expected state. The territorial legislature had passed out of existence, and here was an assumed state legislature undertaking to do business in a territory with a non-determined state governor elected and a territorial governor actually in office. Minnesota was literally in the condition of "What is it?" and it was only due to the ambition of her citizens to put on statehood, that serious legal complication did not arise. One of the early acts of the legislature was the recognition of Governor Medary by permitting him to send his message to the law-making body. The Republicans protested violently that he was not the governor 165 of the state and had nothing to do with the legislature and should not be recognized,

Library of Congress

but the Democrats were in the ascendancy, and his message was duly received and delivered.

The Republicans in both branches entered into a formal protest against this action by signing it and spreading it on the journals, where it remained as one of the permanent state records. The Republicans in the house even went so far as to protest against the entire legislature, but the triumphant Democracy went right along with business just as though the state had been admitted, and before the session was many days old James Starkey of St. Paul introduced a bill providing for the election of two United States senators on the 23d of December. As a matter of form, two days were occupied in passing the bill through the house, and when it reached the senate it was amended to make the election on the 19th and put through in a single day. The house promptly concurred, and, whether state or not, arrangements for the senatorial election were pushed rapidly forward.

The legislature stood: Senate, 21 Democrats, 17 Republicans; the house, 43 Democrats, 37 Republicans. This gave the Democrats a majority of 10 on joint ballot; and under the state law just passed, approved by the territorial government, there was no voting of the separate bodies on the question. All interest, therefore, centered in the Democratic caucus. It was held on the evening of December 17th at the Fuller House in St. Paul, a hotel which was later called the International, and finally destroyed by fire. Sixty-one were present, making 32 necessary for a choice. The first ballot bore fruit by one nomination, the vote standing as follows:

H. M. Rice of St. Paul 56

James Shields of Rice county 25

Frank Steele of Mendota 17

Willis A. Gorman of St. Paul 15

Library of Congress

Joseph R. Gorman of St. Paul 8

It required three more ballots to make the second selection, the vote standing as follows:

2d Ballot. 3d Ballot. 4th Ballot. Shields 24 26 33 Steele 25 24 28 Gorman 12 11 166

This gave Shields the nomination for the second senator. Though the Republicans knew their case was hopeless, they nominated David Cooper of St. Paul and Henry D. Huff of Winona. At the election on December 19th Rice was first elected, receiving 66 votes to 50 for Cooper, two Democrats being absent and four Republicans voting for Rice.

For the second senatorship the vote stood Shields 61, Huff 54. That night, which was Saturday, the Democrats jubilated over the victory very heavily. One hotel did not afford sufficient facilities for their superabundance of joy. They first had a spread at the old American House, on the corner of Third and Exchange streets, where Col. D. A. Robertson, ex-Governor Gorman, W. W. Phelps and others made congratulatory speeches. From there they adjourned to the Fuller House, which was the swell hotel of the town, where a formal banquet was given, and Senators Rice and Shields, Governors Medary and Gorman, George L. Becker and a host of lesser lights "made Rome howl."

No record has been preserved and handed down of any church services in the town the next day, but it is fair to presume that the Republicans were sufficiently mad and disconsolate in their defeat to attend divine worship. It is pretty certain that the other fellows were not particular whether church kept open or not, so long as the other places were open.

While the so-called state legislature could go ahead and elect senators, it could not seat them at Washington, and, though the action stood, it was five months later, May 12, 1858, before the state was actually admitted and they became senators. There was a long and short term, and Rice and Shields cast lots as to who should serve the respective terms. Rice won the long term and served until March 3, 1863, while Shields retired March 3,

Library of Congress

1859, with less than ten months' service. It was quite appropriate that he should have the short period, as he was a recent comer to the state, while Mr. Rice had settled here in 1849 and served as a delegate from the territory in Congress from Dec. 5, 1853, to March 4, 1857.

Shields had one of the most multitudinous military and political careers of any man that this country has ever known. Reaching the United States from Ireland when 16 years of age, 167 he settled in Illinois, where he served in the legislature, was state auditor and judge of the supreme court, and later commissioner of the general land office. After serving in the Mexican war he was appointed governor of Oregon, but before he could take his seat Illinois elected him to the United States senate, and he abandoned the governorship. Here occurred a very peculiar circumstance. He took his seat in the United States senate March 6. 1849, but discovered that he was ineligible from lack of citizenship, and a few days later resigned. An extra session of the Illinois legislature was called in the fall when the defect had been removed, when he was again elected, this time serving until the 3d of March, 1855.

His next move was to Minnesota, where he founded Shieldsville in Rice county, and was sent to the senate from this state as already recorded. When his short term had about expired he moved to California, served in the War of the Rebellion to 1863, when he retired from the army and settled in Missouri. His usual fortune seemed to follow him to that state, as Louis V. Bogy, one of the senators from Missouri, conveniently died; and, while the governor placed another man in line of promotion by a temporary appointment, when the legislature met Shields was chosen to fill the vacancy and served in the senate from Missouri from January 27th to March 3, 1879. This ended his public career, and June 1st of the same year he died at Ottumwa, Iowa. A United States senator from three different states, with a double election from one of them, for a single term, a general in two wars, is a record which, I believe, no other man has made but James Shields, one of the first senators from Minnesota.

OBSERVATION TWENTY-FIVE.

The First Republican Senator, Morton S. Wilkinson.

The first Republican United States senator elected from Minnesota was Morton S. Wilkinson of Mankato. He was elected on Dec. 16, 1859. The legislature was overwhelmingly Republican. Though the Democrats at the preceding legislature had elected two United States senators, their cause was hopeless in the second legislature, and, Senator Shields' short term expiring, the Republicans took their innings. The great contest was, as usual, in the Republican caucus. David Cooper of St. Paul was the candidate of Northern Minnesota; in fact St. Paul and St. Anthony (now Minneapolis East) pretty nearly comprised the northern line of the state so far as population was concerned. Southern Minnesota had Daniel S. Norton of Winona and Morton S. Wilkinson of Mankato as candidates, while Charles McClure of Red Wing might be counted as representing the central portion of the state. The St. Croix region of the state was especially zealous for Cooper, Hennepin county moderately so, although there was a little chill in their affections, owing to Cooper's residence in St. Paul. It took two evenings to determine the nominee. The first night, December 14th, there were some 10 or 12 ballots in the caucus, which was held in the house of representatives. Wilkinson led, with Cooper, Norton and McClure following in the order named. The votes were so divided that no one had a majority, and, after a long time spent in balloting, an adjournment was effected until the next night. A deadlock resulted in bringing three aspirants to the front. Gen. John B. Sanborn, who was a member of the house, was urged by his friends to take the field, and said that if he could secure 169 the Hennepin delegation he would do so, but wished to ascertain that fact before he decided. A caucus of the Hennepin delegation was therefore called. On the morning after the first caucus an agreement was made that when their votes would turn the scale for Sanborn he should have them. Under these circumstances Sanborn entered the race. Amos Coggsell of Steele county, who was speaker of the house, took

Library of Congress

charge of Sanborn's campaign, and the next night Sanborn took Cooper's place as the leading competitor of Wilkinson. Norton and McClure still stayed in the race, the former having some 10 or 12 votes, but never enough to be very formidable. The southern part of the state was greatly interested in the Winona & St. Peter Railroad, and as the northern portion had a railroad scheme inimical to the Winona & St. Peter project it made the two sections of the state arrayed against each other. There were ten more ballots the second night, and 44 votes were declared necessary for a choice. This was a majority of all the Republican members of the legislature, and while there were several absentees from the caucus it was agreed that the successful man must have a majority of all to elect. When Sanborn began moving up near the danger point of success, Southern Minnesota took the alarm, and Winona, which had been supporting Norton, turned to Wilkinson, and on the last ballot Wilkinson received 45 to 30 for Sanborn. If the Hennepin delegation had kept to their caucus agreement the result might have been different, but when their votes could have settled the matter for Sanborn one of the delegation refused to abide by the caucus and stirred up sufficient ill-feeling to prevent the vote going for him.

Another distinguishing element, so far as Sanborn's candidacy was concerned, was that Coggsell, the leader of his forces, became impressed with the idea that the deadlock might be continued until he (Coggsell) could be thrown into the breach. He accordingly advised Sanborn against consulting and if possible making an alliance with William Mitchell of Winona, who was a member of the house and a leader of the Norton forces. Mitchell was especially looking after the railroad interests of Southern Minnesota, and as Northern Minnesota made no overtures he naturally stood by the locality from whence he hailed.

170

An amusing story told at the time was that about the only man in town who had any ready cash thought the senatorship might come into the open market. He accordingly put \$7,000 in currency in his safe and gave the key to a friend, with instructions to put the money where it would do the most good if the opportunity arose. The man took the key to the

Library of Congress

safe, but never mentioned the candidacy of his friend, so that his name was unknown in the race. For a few hours the wealthy citizen labored under the delusion that he had played the winning card. He was considerably chagrined after the affair was over to ascertain that his friend had a lightning rod up for himself; but he evened the deal to some extent by saying, "He (the friend) thought he was pretty smart, but I gave him the wrong key."

In those days the use of money on such an occasion had not been dreamed of, and I doubt whether any sum could have purchased a senatorship at that time. Still there was absolutely no money in circulation. The members of the legislature only received \$3 per day, and that was paid in state warrants which brought but 65 cents on the dollar when placed on the market. A friend of the late Senator Wilkinson, who is still living, then a resident of Mankato, tells me that he bought Wilkinson a suit of clothes to wear when he came to the legislature, and that the entire wealth of the Mankota crowd when it started for St. Paul to capture the senatorship only amounted to \$45. The man who had bought Wilk's suit had exhausted his own resources and had to remain home. It is hardly surprising that in the midst of such financial destitution it should have seemed that the prize might have a financial determination. At least it does not seem surprising in the light of these modern days. But 1859 was a good while ago. And still at the present time \$7,000 would be considered a very meager sum for a United States senatorship, even if the man had the right key.

The election took place in joint session of the legislature Dec. 16, 1859, and resulted in Wilkinson receiving 79 votes, James Shields (Democrat) 33, and ex-Gov. W. A. Gorman (Democrat) 1. And thus the first Republican senator from Minnesota came into being. At the end of his six years' term Mr. Wilkinson was succeeded by Daniel S. Norton of Winona whose 171 friends had come to him in 1859. He subsequently served a term in the house from 1869 to 1871, and still later he was state senator, but his marked public career ended with the United States senatorship.

Library of Congress

As showing what results may follow from a man being a member of the legislature which elects a United States senator, it can be recorded that in the legislature which elected Wilkinson, J. H. Stewart and John T. Averill, who were in that legislature, became members of congress; R. N. McLaren was for many years assessor of internal revenue and United States marshal; C. D. Sherwood became lieutenant governor; John B. Sanborn a general in the army; A. J. Van Vorhes clerk of the state supreme court; William Pfaender, state treasurer; F. A. Renz, treasurer of the city of St. Paul for many years; A. J. Edgerton, United States senator from Minnesota and United States district judge for Dakota; William Mitchell, judge of the supreme court of this state; C. C. Andrews, minister to Sweden 12 years and consul to Rio Janeiro 4 years; Henry C. Rogers, United States pension agent; L. K. Aker, register of a land office. And if the laws of nature had not compelled a good many to go under the ground, probably all the rest of the members of that legislature would have been reached in due season with a fat thing. As an incentive to humble citizens to secure seats in a legislature which elects United States senators this history is worth the price.

172

OBSERVATION TWENTY-SIX.

Wm. S. King's Election to Congress and the Pacific Mail Scandal.

The congressional campaign in the Third district, in 1874, was notable for several reasons, but more especially from the fact that William S. King, one of the most stalwart characters, who ever appeared in Minnesota politics, was a candidate to succeed Gen. John T. Averill, who had served two terms.

King had been postmaster of the house of representatives in Washington and was credited with having made large sums of money. Whether that was true or not he expended large sums of money in the canvass. I was then publishing the Dispatch, and of course in opposition to King—not on any personal grounds, but he was part of the Ramsey dynasty, and as Ramsey was due to come up in the winter of 1875 as a candidate for his third

Library of Congress

term as United States senator, it would be a great assistance to him to have the members of Congress in his favor. These pages have already shown the selfish interest I had in defeating the Ramsey dynasty; and still events transpired which affected Mr. King which I little dreamed of when the contest began.

In 1867 Congress granted an annual subsidy of \$500,000 to the Pacific Mail Steamship Line as a bonus for carrying the government mails. In 1872 an effort was made to increase this subsidy to a million dollars per annum, and it passed the house of representatives by 110 to 87. There were very plump charges of corruption in the purchase of votes to secure the passage of the bill, etc. Samuel Randall of Pennsylvania, then a Democratic leader in Congress, and very influential, was quite emphatic in making these charges. He was a national character, and charges from such a source could scarcely be ignored. The consequence was that the committee of ways and means, with Dawes of Massachusetts as chairman, was directed to investigate the subject of bribery in connection with the Pacific Mail subsidy bill. At the outset this, seemingly, had nothing to do with Mr. King, but as time wore on stories began to appear in some Eastern papers that the Pacific Mail fund had been largely disbursed through Mr. King, postmaster of the house of representatives. These stories did not become public until he had been elected and was a member of Congress elect from the Third district in Minnesota, due to take his seat on the 4th of March, 1875.

While I had incidentally noted some of these charges, it was not until the issue of the Dispatch of Monday, Dec. 21, 1874, that I really got into the matter.

Mr. R. B. Irwin was credited with being the man that handled the Pacific Mail affairs in Washington, and there had already been traced to him a sum of \$750,000, but at the same time he was accused of having pocketed most of it himself. He had already testified before the ways and means committee, and of course exonerated all members of Congress and everybody else, though he did not deny that he had received large sums for the purpose of promoting the interests of the bill. He finally refused to answer any more questions and

Library of Congress

was in contempt or in prison. On the date mentioned at this stage of the investigation I published the following article in the Dispatch:

As the Ways and Means Committee at Washington appear to be baffled by Irwin's refusal on Saturday to tell to whom he paid the immense Pacific Mail corruption fund, the Dispatch finds it necessary to come to the rescue and supply the missing link.

A prominent gentleman in this city, whose name will be furnished to the Ways and Means Committee, if they desire, relates an incident which he obtained about the time of the occurrence from first hands in New York.

In the spring of 1872, Irwin, the lobby agent of the Pacific Mail, kept a small personal account at the Metropolitan Bank of New York. It was unusual for him to have over \$1,000 on deposit at a time. One morning as the president of the bank came in, he noticed Irwin doing some business with the receiving teller. In a few minutes the teller appeared in the president's room to inform him that Irwin had just deposited a check or draft for \$500,000.

"But you didn't receive it?" said the astonished president.

174

"Certainly, I did," said the teller. "He is a regular customer, and I didn't suppose I had any right to refuse."

"There is something wrong about that," said the president; "that money will be called for tomorrow before we have time to make the collection. You never should have accepted such a check from him."

The next day came, but no demand was made for the money. Several days followed, but still the half-million deposit remained good. Finally a stranger entered the bank with a check for \$125,000 of the deposit drawn to Irwin's order, and endorsed by Irwin.

Library of Congress

"What name?" said the paying teller, as the stranger handed in the check.

"No name is necessary," replied the stranger "Don't you recognize the signature and endorsement?"

"Yes, sir," replied the teller, "but I cannot pay so large a check without knowing to whom I am making payment."

"Isn't the check good for the amount?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sir," replied the teller.

"Then, I want the money on it," said the stranger, "and I won't give my name either."

The teller still declined to pay without a name, and referred the stranger to the higher bank officers. The stranger entered the president's office and called his attention to the conduct of the teller. The president examined the check and declared that the teller was right, and that though the check was good, so large a sum could not be paid without the name of the party presenting it. The stranger persisted in remaining incog, and, notifying the president that he would give him until the next day to pay the check, retired.

A bank messenger was sent to follow the stranger and ascertain if possible who he was. The messenger followed him to the Pacific Mail office, but returned without ascertaining his name, and reported progress.

The next morning the stranger appeared in the president's office and demanded payment again.

"Do you want currency, or will a check of the bank answer?" asked the president.

The stranger said that as he was going to deposit it in a bank where he had an account, a check would be satisfactory.

Library of Congress

The president of the Metropolitan Bank then drew the desired check, and the stranger departed without giving his name.

Again the bank messenger followed, and this time traced the stranger to the Park Bank where he made the deposit. The messenger, taking one of the Park Bank officers aside, asked:

“Do you know who that gentleman is making the deposit?”

“Oh, yes,” was the reply; “that is Mr. King, postmaster of the House of Representatives.”

The Dispatch gives the story without adornment, simply as it was related by one of the parties interested in the matter to a reliable and 175 trustworthy gentleman now a resident of St. Paul. There is a possibility that one of the banks is incorrectly named, but aside from that the story is as originally told.

The ways and means committee here have a clew which they can work up if they choose and obtain the information which Irwin refused to divulge.

It perhaps should be mentioned in this connection that the Saturday previous to the publication of this article, which was on Monday, Irwin had suffered an attack of nervous prostration while before the ways and means committee and could not go on with his testimony.

The article in the Dispatch was duly telegraphed to the New York Sun, and when the Sun reached Washington it was the most sought-for paper in all the city, and created a veritable sensation.

Mr. Dawes, the chairman of the ways and means committee, rose in his seat and presented a medical certificate stating that Richard B. Irwin, a witness in the Pacific Mail

Library of Congress

investigation, was in no physical condition to present himself at the bar of the house or to be subjected to any mental excitement.

This was in response to an effort to bring Irwin to the bar of the house in contempt for refusing to answer questions.

Mr. Dawes, the chairman of the ways and means committee, tee on ways and means to hold sessions in New York in connection with the investigation. The investigation proceeded, the committee went to New York, and in their published report duly verified the original story of the Dispatch, which was the first publicity given to that occurrence. Mr. King claimed that he had favored the Pacific Mail scheme in order to get aid for the Northern Pacific Railroad, in which all the Northwest was greatly interested at that time. He also conceded that he had received money from the Pacific Mail Company for services, but denied very emphatically that he had given a dollar to any member of Congress. He had given this testimony before the ways and means committee prior to the publication of the article in the Dispatch, but after that article Mr. King suddenly disappeared and could not be found. No process could be served upon him summoning him as a witness because he could not be found. It 176 was reported in the New York papers that he had gone to Europe and would not return until spring, after Congress had adjourned. Subsequent developments showed that he had not gone to Europe, but that he went to Canada instead, where he spent the winter selecting fancy live stock for his farm in Minneapolis.

There were loud and insistent demands on the part of the Minnesota people that their member-of-congress-elect should appear and purge himself of what seemed to be pretty strong evidence against him, but William was impervious and preferred life in Canada to being under the protection of the American flag.

The legislature was in session that winter, and on the 29th of January Mr. Wm. S. Crooks arose in the house and offered the following preamble and resolution:

Library of Congress

Whereas, The proceedings now pending at Washington in the matter known as the Pacific Mail corruption investigation, point to the Hon. William S. King as one who, as an officer of the National House of Representatives, accepted money as a consideration for his services in aiding the passage of the subsidy bill to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company; and,

Whereas, Mr. King, having been elected a member of the Forty-fourth Congress from the Third District of this state, the people feel that his usefulness will be greatly impaired and dishonor cast upon the escutcheon of Minnesota unless he at once rectifies his position;

Therefore, be it Resolved, That the people of Minnesota in legislature assembled demand of Mr. King his immediate appearance before the investigating committee in Washington City, and that he there state to said committee what has been his connection with this great national scandal, and thereby vindicate himself; or, failing therein, to place his resignation as representative of this commonwealth in the hands of the governor.

The resolution went over until the next day on notice of debate. The next day Mr. Burchard moved the adoption of the resolution. Loren Fletcher of Minneapolis moved to indefinitely postpone. This was refused, Messrs. Fletcher and Listoe being the only members who voted to indefinitely postpone. The resolution was then adopted.

177

Mr. King had designed to spend the winter, or a portion of it, in St. Paul, working for the re-election of Senator Ramsey for the third term. He had secured headquarters at the Metropolitan Hotel, but he did not occupy them. Regardless of what might come from the investigation, I considered that I had scored a great hit by keeping King out of the senatorial canvass and thus taken a long step towards nailing down the lid on my friend Ramsey, and I took much more interest in this than I did in the exposure of King, as I had no personal desire to make him any trouble or discomfiture. But as it was subsequent

Library of Congress

to the pension agency episode it all came in along the line of my general life policy, as it made sure-enough mischief I was content.

Of course no one supposed that King would resign, and instead of complying with the requests of the legislature he sent them in due time a letter, which read as follows:

To the Legislature of Minnesota:

Gentlemen Senators and Representatives: It has been my good fortune to come into possession of a copy of certain "Joint Resolutions" relating to myself, which resolutions are said to have been passed by the House of Representatives on the 30th day of January last, and by the Senate on the 5th day of February, 1875.

Aside from any bearing these Joint Resolutions may have upon myself, they are, as coming from your body, very extraordinary in their character. They are, gentlemen, very extraordinary in so far as they so correctly illustrate your lack of knowledge of the common proprieties and decencies of official position, of your painful disregard of truth, in your official action, and of your false and hypocritical pretenses of virtuous regard for the "honor of the State of Minnesota." In dealing with you and your joint resolutions, therefore, I shall, gentlemen, speak of you as I know and understand you, paying no regard whatever to that official greatness you so pompously assume during the brief sixty days allotted you, wherein to fit and complete yourselves for that underlying political fame and immortality which each of you, no doubt supposes himself to have been born to.

As for your joint resolution, gentlemen, in which you so indecently assume the falsehood that I "accepted money as a consideration for his 12 178 (my) services in aiding the passage of the subsidy bill to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company," they are, interpreted in other and more common language, *legislative lies*. They are *lies* in a double sense, inasmuch as they not only charge me, by the broadest implication, with having "accepted money for my services," etc., but in asserting, also, by that same broad implication, that I have refused to appear before the Committee of Ways and Means to testify as to my

Library of Congress

connection with and knowledge of the passage of the Pacific Mail subsidy bill. For I now again assert what I two years ago truthfully stated under oath, that I never “accepted” or received one dollar as “consideration for my services in aiding the passage” of that bill, while I took great pleasure in appearing before the committee, at the very opening of this investigation, and testifying fully as to all I know concerning the matter.

Therefore, it is, gentlemen of the legislature, that I thus distinctly charge you with having spread upon the records of your respective houses flagrant and audacious falsehoods concerning myself, an act which, to use your own language, is calculated to “cast dishonor upon the escutcheon of Minnesota,” unless you shall have the decency to “at once rectify your positions” by expunging these disgraceful falsehoods from your journals.

But, gentlemen, who are you, and what are you, that you thus pompously set yourselves up as my masters and assume to instruct me, a private citizen (for I am only such, as yet), in this or any other matter? Who constituted you either my masters or my judges, that you thus impudently presume to issue instructions to me, and impose penalties for non-compliance with your insolent demands? Make hasty answer, I pray you, for almost before this letter can reach you, you will have disappeared into that position of “nothingness” from which you were only lifted by one of those political accidents of annual occurrence in our state. And the only reply I have to make to the impudent demands of your joint resolution is, that in this, as in all other matters, my action will be governed by my own sense of duty, of right, and of propriety.

Under what arrangement *I did* receive a large sum of money, about the time of the passage of the Pacific Mail subsidy bill, is a matter which I do not propose to disclose to the world except in my own good time, nor until evidence which I am unable to reach now can be secured, to the end that the exact facts in the case can be presented to the public, which will meet the fullest and most complete vindication against the falsehoods which you have spread upon your respective journals. Until that time, which I trust is not far distant, I have only to say that not one dollar of the money received by me, of which so much

Library of Congress

has been talked and written, was ever intended for or applied to the influencing of a vote upon the Pacific Mail subsidy, and no word or line of all the evidence that has been taken during this long and most searching investigation even "points" to any such conclusion. And so, conscious 179 of my own rectitude in this matter, and pausing here to tender to that one representative who was just enough towards me to refuse his assent to your lying declarations my grateful thanks, I pass on to some other points, which I propose to present to your and the public's consideration.

In perusing the proceedings of your very distinguished body (and the farther away from home its name goes the more "distinguished" it becomes) upon this matter, I notice that in the presentation, discussion and adoption of these "Joint Resolutions" very many of you spoke and voted as my "friends." Even the gentleman who introduced the resolutions into the house and demanded such hasty and immediate action upon them, though a political opponent, professed to speak and act "in no partizan spirit" but "as a personal friend." Let me not be so ungrateful as to intimate that this statement was not more false or "crooked" than are the resolutions themselves. For the sake of argument I will concede that it was not. And so of others; they spoke "as friends." May God make me sufficiently grateful to my "friends."

I observe, gentlemen of the legislature, that in presenting and adopting these joint resolutions, you express the fear that my "future usefulness will be greatly impaired and dishonor cast upon the escutcheon of Minnesota" unless I shall at once comply with the demands you make upon me. That seems to be the fear that oppresses you; the nightmare which disturbs your slumbers; the sense of danger which haunts your waking and sleeping hours, and plunges your virtuous souls into the very depths of despair. Well, gentlemen, from what I know of your political lives and characters, I should have expected nothing else. Taking your "representative men" and your leaders as fair samples of the present virtuous "legislature of Minnesota" and I can readily imagine the anguish of heart which would pervade your whole body upon the disclosures of my assumed wickedness. There is by old-time "friend" Morton S. Wilkinson, for instance, who adorns by his life

Library of Congress

and virtues one branch of your body. What a teacher and exemplar of official honesty and purity he is. How he weeps and wails over the danger to the “escutcheon” from unworthy representatives. And how carefully *he* guarded the “escutcheon” when a senator and representative in congress. How nobly he stood for public virtue and honesty when he so stoutly insisted on a “fair divide” in those Indian transactions, so well known and understood by so many in our state. How earnestly he insisted that “something handsome should be made” out of the confirmation of certain treaties with foreign powers where his vote was needed. And with what touching devotion did he champion the cause of public virtue and benevolence by so strenuously insisting upon the broad and generous doctrine of “give and take,” he always playing the humble and virtuous part of “take.” How bravely he advocated the cause of “Cuban independence” in the house, when Cuban bonds were not worth one per cent on the dollar, and with what independence 180 and vigor he denounced General Grant's first administration for not adopting his suggestion as a member of the committee on foreign affairs, and going in for a policy which would have made those same bonds worth 75 cents on the dollar, simply by our going to the trifling expense of a war with Spain. But, gentlemen, “Wilk” did not care anything about the “bonds.” Bless your and his virtuous souls, no! What did the insignificant amount of \$50,000 of Cuban gold bonds matter to such a high-toned and hawkeyed sentinel of the “escutcheon” as “Wilk.” Gentlemen legislators, you only do yourselves and your own characters simple injustice in following “Wilk” as a proper leader in this crusade against official corruption.

And *he* —shall I name “him?” *Need* I name “him?” Doesn't every legislative eye turn instinctively towards that proud champion of political virtue and “reform” before whom fifty-three of you so recently bowed in political adoration, without any resorting to the vulgar necessity of uttering the name of—Donnelly? Donnelly! ! ! a name familiarized to the people of Minnesota by its close and intimate association with all that is pure and good in politics, during the ten years' service he rendered in guarding the “escutcheon;” a name synonymous with the loftiest integrity, purity of character, exalted patriotism, and

Library of Congress

unyielding devotion to the cause of public virtue and the honor of the “escutcheon.” And when I recall that fifty-three of you gentlemen of the legislature, thoroughly acquainted with Mr. Donnelly and his public record, recognize in him a fit and proper representative of yours, and gave him your votes for United States Senator, I am forced to admit that you performed one of the most proper political acts of your lives. For Donnelly is worthy of you and your votes, and you are worthy—but, no, I cannot say that. No, Mr. Donnelly is worthy of more reputable followers than *you*, so far as I have the honor of your personal acquaintance. For I here assert that I think him just as *honest* as you who so recently kneeled before him and decorated him with your votes for United States Senator, while the most common-headed man in the state, outside the present “Minnesota Legislature” will at once admit that he has more brains than all of you. So, extending to Donnelly my sympathy that he could not have been favored with a more reputable class of supporters, I proceed to remark that, after all, your mutual relations are, beyond doubt, the most fit and proper that could have been established. For Donnelly's political “kite” no more tasty and becoming “tail,” with fifty-three joints, could possibly have been constructed, even down to the very last little “Crook” at the end. The combination of materials and character is most happily blended from extreme to extreme, and I do not wonder that you are sometimes vain and even pompous in view of the very satisfactory and happy relations you sustain to your distinguished head and leader. For Donnelly's kite is, fortunately for your ambition, different from other articles of that kind, inasmuch as he can always furnish wind 181 enough to float it in any kind of political weather. This close political “attachment” between yourselves and Donnelly, gentlemen, is also very fortunate for you in another respect: that it enables you to reach a political altitude, which you could otherwise never have hoped to attain.

But, gentlemen, interesting to you, as I know this somewhat digressive branch of the subject must be, proud, as I know you must be, at the exalted position which your “attachment” to Donnelly enables you to reach, I must pass on to the more important points of this subject. And as Mr. Donnelly is a member of your “joint” body, and as he too,

Library of Congress

doubtless, considered my case "in no partizan spirit" but rather "as a friend" I feel myself bound to make proper recognition of the fact. As the sturdy foe of "political corruption" and the degrading influence of the "lobbies," as the eloquent champion, both by pen and voice, of "political reform," to say nothing of his having enjoyed the somewhat questionable honor of having so recently been voted for by you, "a man after your own hearts," I come to pay my tribute to his public worth.

In entering upon this task, you will not, of course, expect me to do it anything like full or complete justice. Neither time nor space will admit of that, and so I must, of necessity, omit much which would, if disclosed to you, exalt Mr. Donnelly still more in your estimation. But I pass by those comparatively trifling matters connected with his thrifty transactions at the "Leech Lake" and "Bayfield" Indian agencies; the "meat-y" little jobs picked up from the Pacific railroads when a member of the railroad committee of the House of Representatives; the bold and dashing "business" propositions made by him during the senatorial contest of some six years ago; and proceed to call your attention to the following "high testimonial" as to Mr. Donnelly's honesty and virtue, those two prominent traits of character which so strongly commended him to your sympathies, your votes, and your "moral" support. This testimonial is dated at the rooms of the executive committee of the Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railroad Company, April 10, 1869, and is an extract from the proceedings of that committee, as follows:

"The committee also approve of a transfer of \$200,000 of stock, made by W. Schmoele to Ignatius Donnelly, and authorize W. Schmoele to pay said Donnelly a due bill of \$50,000 out of the proceeds of the loan in Paris as fast as convenient, said due bill being signed by J. C. Fremont and B. H. Epperson, and dated February, 1869, and to be considered as a retaining fee for said Donnelly as counsel for this company, required to effect a connection of this company with the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, for united action to obtain subsidies."

Library of Congress

It will be observed, gentlemen, that while these proceedings bear date of April 10, 1869, the transaction with your candidate and leader, 182 Mr. Donnelly, seems to have been completed some two months previous, the fifty thousand dollars due bill being dated February, 1869, while you will remember Mr. Donnelly was a member of the House of Representatives, and guarding so vigilantly then, as he is now, the “honor” and the “escutcheon” of Minnesota.

I do not wish to be understood as charging that, by reason of the above recited transactions, Mr. Donnelly's vigilance in guarding the “escutcheon” was in any way relaxed; for it may be—and I give Mr. Donnelly the benefit of the suggestion—that he “pinned” the stock and the “due bill” fast to the “escutcheon” so that he could conveniently keep his eye upon both at the same time.

God forbid, gentlemen, that I should be so uncharitable as to insinuate that any knowledge that you may have possessed of the facts upon which this “high testimonial” is based, or the generous figures it contains, had anything to do with the adoption of Mr. Donnelly as your recognized leader and senatorial candidate. No, no. I know you too well for that. Memphis & El Paso R. R. stock is not the kind of assets which would quicken your regard for or commend any candidate to your favor. No, it was Donnelly's *principles* you loved. It was “his way” of guarding the “escutcheon.” It was his style of political purity and virtue which excited your patriotic pride, and made him the master of your hearts and votes.

Gentlemen of the Minnesota Legislature, Mr. Donnelly is with you and of you still. He “moves, breathes and has his being” within your highly virtuous body. He is subject to your call and to your jurisdiction. But he is, also—I do not say this to flatter him, but simply “as a friend”—the principal part, the “butt-end” of the present very pretentious “Legislature of Minnesota.” He rules and “runs” two of the three parties who make up your distinguished body, and seems to inspire the fatal and destructive policy of the other. Therefore, there will be no exhibition of your superior virtue and honesty in the case of either “Wilk” or Donnelly. There will be no investigations asked by you into Mr. Donnelly's transactions

Library of Congress

with the Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railroad Company, unless it be to “inquire” of Mr. Donnelly why in the name of all the Prophets he did not compel the company to make his payments “all cash,” instead of taking so much railroad stock. Ah, gentlemen, had he only have done that, what rich “pickings” you would have had, and how the “fifty-three jointed tail” would have shaken and quivered with delight, clear down to the last little “Crooks” at the end. Yes, gentlemen, you would have had Mr. Donnelly *elected* senator long before this, and would doubtless have added still another to your series of “joint resolutions” upon the importance of protecting the “honor” and the “escutcheon” of Minnesota. But, as it is, you have fulfilled your mission. You have, peacock-like, made a public “spread” and exhibition of your virtue by placing a falsehood against me upon your journals, and there you 183 will “rest.” Now you will go on with your corrupt bargains and intrigues in senatorial matters. Your buying and selling of each other may now be resumed with perfect impunity. Even as I write a telegraphic statement from St. Paul, which I found in the public journals, informs me that “active negotiations are now in progress” upon the senatorship, of which I have no doubt.

I might, gentlemen of the Legislature, pursue this branch of my subject almost indefinitely. Your pure and virtuous tastes do not, it is true, all run in the same direction, but they “run.” With some of you they travel in the line of railroad schemes. With some they lead into the rich domain of swindling government and Indian contracts; some into the delightful pursuit of manufacturing and dealing in bogus half-breed scrip; while others of you prefer the more quiet and shady pathways of “pine land rings.” But all of you are equally honest and virtuous. Your characters in that respect you have founded upon your lying joint resolutions, and when your sixty days of legislative life have expired, you can all go home and put your biographers at work upon the rich material to be found therein.

One more point, Gentlemen of the Legislature, and I am done—for the present. Others there are who, though not members of your illustrious body, are equally honest and

Library of Congress

virtuous as yourselves, and who, equally solicitous for the “escutcheon,” may lay claim to consideration at your hands as your outside pillars and “moral” supporters.

They, too, have suffered by reason of my assumed wickedness. Their hearts have bled as freely as yours at the fearful picture of my wrong-doing. There is the late chairman of the Democratic congressional committee, who mourned so deeply and roared so loudly over his own lying statements of the expenditure of money in the canvass last fall, but who was finally detected in fingering and disbursing the thousand dollar checks of my opponent. And there was “another one,” if possible a still more virtuous one, who, having once attempted to bribe me, when an officer of the House of Representatives, to betray the community in which I live, and whose bribes having been spurned by me, was very loud and emphatic in his expressions of my unfitness for representative in Congress—as for all such as he I most certainly am. And then, gentlemen, there is your very proper “organ,” the St. Paul Dispatch, the editor and proprietor of which, while trying to blackmail me out of a large sum of money after my nomination last fall upon the promise of supporting me, was not only willing I should be elected to the house, but strongly insisted that I should be a candidate for United States Senator; but who, when I peremptorily refused to “come down” as demanded by him, suddenly discovered, to his virtuous horror, that he had been vainly trying to sell himself and his paper to one of the most corrupt and dangerous men of the age. Gentlemen of the Legislature, I beg for these, your virtuous compatriots in the sacred cause of guarding the “honor” and “escutcheon” 184 of our state, the privilege of consigning themselves to immortal honor by joining with you in this solemn “joint resolution” ceremonial as “subscribing witnesses.” In your common efforts for a great cause you should not be divided by the mere lines of position, but hand in hand, in united brotherhood of spirit, you should walk together to the end.

Then, upon your brave and manly act in engraving upon the legislative records of our state a slander and a falsehood against a private citizen, whose life for seventeen years past has been unselfishly and honorably devoted to the advancement of the best interests and the honor of our young commonwealth, let there be a benediction pronounced by some

Library of Congress

“fine type of an old school statesman,” whose official record, truthfully written, would be the fit “companion-piece” of that of Ignatius Donnelly, and your actions in this matter of your “joint resolutions” will be complete and harmonious in all their parts.

With as much respect, Gentlemen, and as little contempt as possible for me to feel towards you under the circumstances,

I remain, unresigningly yours, WILLIAM S. KING.

February 11th, 1875.

As a counter irritant and diverting attention by accusing others, Mr. King's letter was quite a success at the time, and after the lapse of 30 years makes interesting reading. Some years later, when other men had come upon the scene but while King was still living, the resolutions were formally expunged by another legislature. This was, of course, only a matter of form, as the offending resolutions still stand in the journals and will there remain while the archives of the state exist. Both the original and the expunging resolutions are so buried and forgotten that they would never be known but for this history. Unfortunately, King's letter never got into the journals, so that up to date the legislature would seem to be several laps ahead.

185

OBSERVATION TWENTY-SEVEN.

Senator Davis' Election for the Second Term by a Scratch.

When the eulogiums on the late Senator C. K. Davis are recalled, which were pronounced at the time of his death, it seems almost a matter of surprise that a few years before he narrowly escaped being defeated for a re-election to the senate. It seems as if a statesman with his record would have been the unanimous choice of a young state like Minnesota, as he reflected more credit on the state than the state did upon him.

Library of Congress

In January, 1893, Davis was elected to the senate for the second time, but it was by a scratch. In 1899, he was elected for the third term without a shadow of opposition. He had been endorsed in the campaign prior to the meeting of the legislature of 1893, and everybody supposed he would have easy sailing; but there was a cloud upon the horizon. The caucus was called almost as soon as the legislature met, and it was held on the 4th of January. This showed nervousness on the part of Davis and his friends, or they would not have been so anxious to get the senatorial nomination out of the way before the members of the legislature had had time to think it over and collect their wits. In the caucus there were present 21 senators out of 25 Republicans, and 71 Republican representatives, with eight absentees, making 64 absolutely present from the house. There was no especial excitement or lack of harmony in the caucus. O. B. Turell of Redwood Falls was chosen to preside, without opposition, and the vote was not by secret ballot but viva voce by roll call. H. F. Stevens, then senator from St. Paul, made the speech nominating Davis. As the result of the roll call, Davis received the votes of 22 senators and 64 representatives, a total of 86. One of the senators 186 was a member of the Farmers' Alliance and not a Republican, but he was allowed to participate in the caucus, so that Davis really had 85 Republican votes in the caucus. Three of the absentees sent word that they were for Davis, and his strength was counted as 88 reliable.

After this caucus nomination Senator Davis was brought in to make a speech, and thanked the caucus quite briefly. It is notable as showing the mutations of politics that John Lind was a member of that caucus as a Republican, though he has since served a term as Democratic governor of the state. He too was called upon to make a speech after Davis' nomination, and responded as follows:

I won't make any speech, but no act of yours will send such a greeting to every Republican heart in the land as this which you have just done.

In view of this declaration, Lind can truthfully say that "things are not as they used to be."

Library of Congress

This was the 4th of January, and the mischief afloat was thus exposed in an editorial in the Pioneer Press on the 13th of January:

Sinister rumors have been afloat for some days that a persistent attempt was being made to buy off enough Republican members of the legislature to defeat the election of the Republican caucus nominee for United States senator. The Pioneer Press is informed that abundant proofs are at hand that these rumors have substantial foundation. It is intimated that sums as high as \$2,500 have been offered to Republican members if they would absent themselves from the legislature during next Tuesday, when the two houses will vote separately for a United States senator, and on the next Wednesday, or, if necessary, on subsequent days, when the two houses will meet in joint convention to consummate the election. The same parties, we are told, have been offered much larger sums if they would stay in their seats on the senatorial election days and vote against Senator Davis. The Democrats and their clandestine Republican co-conspirators would not seem to have an easy task before them in seeking to undermine the solid foundation on which the nomination of Mr. Davis rests, even by such potent and insidious forces as the resort to bribery and corruption.

As the Republicans had 26 majority in joint convention in the legislature it really did seem as if the conspirators had undertaken 187 a large contract. Nevertheless, it came very nearly winning. The Pioneer Press, being a partizan newspaper, of course charges the matter up to the Democrats, but "co-conspirators" is a good word to use. The plan was not to elect a Democrat to the senate, but to elect another Republican. The Democrats and Populists were sufficiently numerous in the legislature to enable this to be done if they could unite on one man and buy 14 Republican votes for him, so that it was a clear and plain business proposition. The money was to be furnished by Republicans, and the votes were to be purchased by Democratic leaders; they, in turn, getting their own party in line without purchase. So that if there is any question of which was the more reputable of the two parties it would be very difficult to absolutely determine. The whole thing was

Library of Congress

a piece of rascality, conceived in corruption, and endeavored to be brought to success by the basest means known in politics. The vote in the respective houses of the legislature took place on January 17th. In the house, Davis received 67 out of 114; D. W. Lawler, the Democratic nominee, 31; S. M. Owens, the Farmers' Alliance candidate, 12; Moses E. Clapp, 1; Albert Scheffer, 1; C. M. Start, 1. In the senate Davis received 20, Lawler 17, Owens 1, Merriam 2, Start 1, Scheffer 1, Lind 1, D. A. Dickinson 1.

So far the plot was working all right. Davis had a majority in the house, and if he had had a majority in the senate it would only have been necessary to read the journals of the respective bodies in the joint convention the next day, and the election would be over. But as the conspirators planned he did not have a majority in the senate, and consequently it was necessary to take a vote in joint convention the next day, January 18th.

As showing that the scheme for purchasing the election was a hard proposition, I quote the following editorial paragraph from the Pioneer Press of June 16th, two days prior to the vote in the legislature:

The boodlers have apparently given up the fight. The scheme they undertook to work under Democratic inspiration was not lacking in audacity or even in impudence, whatever may be said of the sagacity, to say nothing of the honesty of those who inspired it. They proposed to select as against Davis some other Republican if they could find 188 one who would accept the doubtful honor by a combination of the Democratic and Populist cohorts, reinforced by the purchased individual treachery of 14 Republicans.

The Pioneer was still harping upon the Democratic inspiration, but the real inspiration was the money of the men (Republicans) who hoped to profit by the defeat of Senator Davis.

Money will inspire more deviltry than all the politicians and political theories in the world combined; in fact the deviltry in politics would not exist if it was not backed up by cash.

Library of Congress

The joint convention met on January 18th, and as soon as it was called to order Speaker Lee announced that, as the vote in the houses separately the day previous showed that no one person had received a majority in each house, it would be necessary to call the roll and take a ballot for United States senator. There were 168 members of the legislature present, and it was pretty well known how 167 of them would vote. Mr. Holler, Republican representative from Wright county, had been absent from the original caucus and also absent from the house the preceding day when the first official vote was taken. He was the pivotal man. Davis' fate rested in his hands, as it was believed if an election could be prevented that day the plot to defeat him could then be developed and carried to success. All of the spectators were anxious to take a look at Holler, and he was the cynosure of all eyes while the roll was being called. When his name was about to be reached the Davis men held their breath; in fact it was a case of suspended animation for a moment; but when in response to his name he voted for Davis, Bob Dunn, the present candidate for governor on the Republican ticket, who was a member of the legislature from Mille Lacs county, let out a yell worthy of a Sioux Indian on the war path and led the cheering for Davis, which was loud, long and vociferous.

Winning by an eye-lash made the victory all the more sweet; and when the record was made up it was found that Davis had 85 votes, the exact number necessary and no more; Lawler 49, Owen 23, Merriam 2, Lind 2, Scheffer 2, Clapp 3, Start 1, Dickinson 1. Seven Republican senators had voted against Davis, but he had enough without them.

189

There was a good deal of talk at the time of political death awaiting those seven senators, and still it can be said, as showing the forgetfulness and forgiving spirit of the American people, that one of the senators was re-elected, and one has since been sent to Congress. The whirligig of politics brings strange results. At this time there probably is not a man living who is proud of having voted against Davis if he was a member of the Republican party at that time. But Davis and his friends suffered the scare of their lives, and it took

them a long time to recover from the effects of the terror they experienced. It was like a person having his hair turn white in a night by excessive fright. At that time those who were bald-headed were congratulating themselves.

190

OBSERVATION TWENTY-EIGHT.

McGill's Nomination for Governor.

There have been a great many notable contests in Minnesota, but they have largely been confined to congressional and senatorial matters. Perhaps the gubernatorial contest of 1886 was the one, involving the whole state, which attracted the most interest up to the one in this current year, which is considered in a later chapter.

In the campaign of 1886 there was a quadrangular contest for the Republican nomination for governor. The candidates were A. R. McGill, who was credited to Nicollet county, C. A. Gilman of Stearns, J. L. Gibbs of Freeborn, and Albert Scheffer of St. Paul. Mr. Scheffer did not remain in the field as a formal candidate though he was voted for in the convention, and the leading competitors were McGill and Gilman, with Gibbs nearly up to Gilman's figures.

McGill had been private secretary to Governor Austin for two terms, and also state insurance commissioner, which involved his residing in St. Paul, and consequently his political opponents tried the usually fatal claim that he lived in the city, though it did not prove successful at this time. At first the St. Paul Dispatch supported Scheffer, but after he withdrew it advocated Gilman, while the Pioneer Press championed McGill. The Dispatch endeavored to show that St. Paul was more likely to secure the United States senator with Gilman in the chair of state than McGill. Five or six weeks before the state convention the Dispatch said:

Library of Congress

In our opinion the candidacy of Mr. Davis for United States senator should be made paramount to every other consideration. If

A. R. McGill

191 anybody's candidacy for any other office stands in Mr. Davis' way he should be promptly dropped by Ramsey County Republicans. We should fix our eyes on a senatorial seat for C. K. Davis and subordinate every other minor consideration to that end.

To offset this, McGill's friends insisted that he really belonged in St. Peter, which was his home, and where he owned a newspaper; that he had only been brought to St. Paul temporarily for political purposes, and it should not be counted as an unpardonable political sin that he lived in the city for a few years, as a necessary adjunct to drawing his salary.

The Republican state convention having the matter in charge met in St. Paul, September 23rd, with 361 delegates. Capt. H. A. Castle was then chairman of the state central committee, and called the convention to order. M. J. Daniels of Rochester promptly nominated A. C. Wedge of Albert Lea for chairman. This produced a storm. Knute Nelson (now Senator Nelson) sprang to his feet and made a fiery protest. Nelson was supporting Gilman, and he claimed that this chairmanship selection was a Gibbs move, aided by McGill and warned, the Republicans that the Fifth Congressional District, where Gilman lived, was where they would have to look for their votes if they carried the state. Loren Fletcher of Minneapolis and John A. Lovely of Albert Lea made speeches in reply to Nelson, disclaiming any effort to take advantage, even going so far as to offer to withdraw Wedge, but he was evidently an entering "wedge," for this, which was only a bluff, was not done, and in spite of Nelson's fusillade Wedge was elected chairman with only three opposing votes.

It was nearly 4 o'clock when the afternoon session of the convention began, and Knute Nelson was again on deck. He moved to have the platform reported before the

Library of Congress

nominations. H. G. Hicks of Minneapolis and Fletcher then united in a little parliamentary by-play which rather got the better of Nelson. Hicks moved to table Nelson's resolution, and just then Fletcher claimed attention from the chair. Nelson sought to interrupt, when Fletcher said: "I have the floor, Mr. Nelson. We are not here to be defeated by any chicanery, sharp practice, or trickery." Nelson then raised the point that a motion to lay on the table 192 was not debatable, but Hicks came to Fletcher's rescue by withdrawing the motion while Fletcher was still on his feet. Fletcher then added, "I know my rights, Mr. Nelson. I have the floor. The opposition want delay. Their purposes are neither manly nor creditable to a convention like this." Having thus relieved himself, Fletcher sat down, while Hicks immediately renewed his motion to lay Nelson's motion on the table, and as such a motion was not debatable Nelson's wind was shut off, though he attempted to reply.

Fletcher's rebuke of "sharp practices" under these circumstances was pretty good, and almost suggestive of Satan in the pulpit. The motion to lay on the table prevailed and balloting for governor was then in order. The chair called for nominations, but there was no response. He then asked directly if any one wanted to name McGill; but even this broad hint did not bring a nominating speech, and the convention went into informal ballot without a candidate being named. The whole number of votes cast were 361, necessary to a choice 181. An informal and two formal ballots were taken, with the following results:

Informal. 1st Formal. 2nd Formal. McGill 156 163 168 Gilman 103 100 102 Gibbs 98 96 88
Scheffer 1 1 2 Scattering 3 2

At this stage of the proceedings the excitement was intense, and the opponents of McGill wanted time to think about it and see what combinations could be made. A recess was accordingly taken with a view of having an evening session. At the adjourned evening session balloting was immediately resumed, but it only took two ballots to settle the contest. They were as follows:

Third Ballot. Fourth Ballot. McGill 175 190 Gilman 95 60 Gibbs 75 42 Scheffer 16 66 193

The Gilman and Gibbs men had undertaken to make a dark-horse candidate of Scheffer, and while they ran his vote up they could not control their own forces, and in the break

Library of Congress

enough went to McGill to nominate him. Possibly if the combination had been attempted earlier it would have won, but Gilman and Gibbs each lived in hopes a little too long. The Dispatch had been supporting H. A. Castle for lieutenant governor, but when it came to ballot A. E. Rice of Kandiyohi county had 237 to 103 for Castle.

About the only other notable thing about the ticket was the defeat of Sam Nichols for clerk of the supreme court. He had held the office continually from 1876, and began to feel that there was a sort of life tenure in the position. His chief competitor was J. D. Jones of Long Prairie, though there were three other candidates. It required three ballots to determine the result. But after the second ballot two of the candidates withdrew in favor of Jones, which gave him the victory. Nichols received 111, 124, and 107 votes, while Jones had 70, 102, and 234 votes on the respective ballots. It was at this convention that Hon. Moses E. Clapp, now U. S. senator, first came into prominence by securing the position of attorney general. There were four candidates in the field, with Dean Pattee, now of the state university, Clapp's chief competitor. There were two ballots, Clapp receiving 142 and 182 votes, while Pattee had 98 and 69. While Clapp won he had only one vote to spare, as 181 were necessary for a choice, the other votes being cast for Kellogg and Burlingame. As evidence that newspaper predictions are not always reliable, I quote the following which appeared at the head of the editorial columns of Captain Castle's Dispatch August 11th, the day preceding the convention:

From a careful perusal of the state press the following seems to be the complexion of the state ticket:

Governor—C. A. Gilman.

Lieutenant Governor—H. A. Castle.

Secretary of State—H. G. Stordock.

Treasurer—Joseph Bobleter.

Library of Congress

Auditor—W. W. Braden.

Attorney General—In doubt. 13

194

As the first three officers really selected were McGill, Rice and Hans Mattson, and the last was not named in the prophesy, it left the Dispatch right in two instances out of six, which might be termed close prognostication if a person was reckless as to facts.

The Dispatch was very sore over the result, and especially berated R. B. Langdon and Loren Fletcher of Minneapolis for McGill's nomination. Just a week after the nomination, in reply to tantalization by the Pioneer Press, the Dispatch said:

When it comes to a choice of two evils, choose the least. The editor of the Dispatch expects to vote the Republican ticket, McGill and all, but that is only because that, bad as are the influences that nominated and will control McGill, they are preferable to the influences that will control Ames."

Per contra, the Pioneer Press, the morning after the nomination, said this:

There is no member of the party who can find cause for dissatisfaction in the ticket presented for his support. McGill is a strong man, a clean man, an honest man. He is a man about whom there lingers no odor of jobbery, no smells from the fumes of a political pit. Against him neither public nor private scandal has ever raised a whistper.

The canvass before the people was vigorous and exciting. Dr. A. A. Ames of Minneapolis was the Democratic candidate for governor, and struck a popular chord with the laboring classes, the result being that he gave Governor McGill a close run. The vote at the election stood:

McGill 106,966

Library of Congress

Ames 104,483

James E. Child (Prohibition) 9,030

Child's vote came very largely from the Republican ranks, but so far as practical results were concerned McGill only had 2,483 plurality over Ames.

An exciting county-seat contest had quite a bearing on the result. In fact Ames claimed that he would have been elected but for the county-seat contest in Becker county, and went so far as to come down to St. Paul and take the oath of office as governor before a magistrate.

It was Ames' intention to make a formal contest with McGill, but he never pressed the matter, and consequently McGill took his seat in due time. It is quite possible that the result might have been different if it had not been for a riot in Minneapolis the night preceding the election. The Republicans had a torchlight street parade, and as excitement ran high the leading citizens of the city—men like Chas. A. Pillsbury, ex-Gov. John S. Pillsbury, Thomas Lowry and others—marched in the procession. The Democrats lost their heads and assaulted them, some of the conspicuous Republican leaders being considerably bruised. The result was that a storm of local indignation was aroused at this ruffianism, which unquestionably cost Ames many votes. In view of subsequent developments just what might have happened if A. A. Ames had been elected governor of Minnesota is a chapter of history which it is now entirely unnecessary to write.

196

OBSERVATION TWENTY-NINE.

W. R. Merriam's Election as Governor.

After the lapse of a few years people forget political contests. The great majority of the delegates to the Republican state convention in 1904 which nominated a state ticket,

Library of Congress

were in the habit of saying to themselves and each other: "There never has been any such contest as this before in the state." As a matter of fact, with the exception that the convention was much smaller, there was a contest for the gubernatorial nomination between A. R. McGill, Albert Scheffer and W. R. Merriam, with Charles A. Gilman of St. Cloud on the side as a sort of "Barkis is willin'," which was as bitter and exciting as the convention of 1904.

This was September 5 and 6, 1888. Scheffer and Merriam were residents of St. Paul, while McGill was credited to Nicollet county, though he almost ranked as a St. Paulite, as his duties as private secretary to Governor Austin and insurance commissioner had made him reside in St. Paul since 1870.

Governor McGill was serving his first term, and by the unwritten political law of the party was entitled to the endorsement of a second term. He had made an acceptable official and, furthermore, had gone through his first campaign as the champion of high license, which his party had made an issue. Upon this issue he narrowly escaped defeat. He was as conspicuous in the state as the party representative of that issue as McKinley became later the party representative of the tariff.

After McGill was elected he urged high license in his message, presided and spoke at public meetings held to advocate the measure while the legislature was considering the bill, and in every way stood as its champion. Everyone is now in favor of 197 high license, the saloon men as well as the temperance advocates, outside of absolute prohibitionists. But it was a different matter then. The proposed measure lifted \$25 licenses to \$500, and \$50 and \$100 licenses to \$1,000, according to the population of the town. St. Paul had over 800 saloons, with a license revenue of only \$80,000, while now with about 300 saloons the revenue is \$300,000. The high license law was really a peaceable revolution, and Governor McGill, owing to his official position, stood as the party leader for the measure.

Library of Congress

W. R. Merriam had been speaker of the house in 1887, and evidently regarded that as a stepping stone to the governorship, just as speakers of the national house aim to go from that position to the presidency. Waiting two years to give Governor McGill his second term seemed too long a period for Merriam, and he accordingly decided to enter the race in 1888.

Seeing that Governor McGill was to have competition, Albert Scheffer concluded to join in the exercises, and thus a contest was engendered which proved to be very bitter before it was concluded.

Scheffer was first launched by a Farmers' Alliance meeting. This was done to beat Merriam on his own ground, as he had been especially coquetting with that element of the people. After the Farmers' Alliance movement Mr. Scheffer opened formal headquarters at the Merchants hotel in St. Paul, in charge of C. D. Baker of Fergus Falls, who with a corps of assistants worked several months in the Scheffer cause prior to the convention. The state was deluged with literature in all languages, and up to that date the most active preliminary campaign ever seen in the state was conducted by Mr. Scheffer and his friends.

Mr. Merriam conducted his campaign from his banking house, literally and emphatically, and relied very largely upon personal agents who visited nearly and perhaps every county in the state. His campaign was not so much on the town-meeting order as Scheffer's, but of a character to reach the right spot and put the investment where it would do the most good, which was more effective in the end.

Governor McGill had his headquarters in the saddle, or, to be more exact, in the executive offices at the capitol.

Library of Congress

The fact that Governor McGill was in office really handicapped the activity of his campaign, as it was beneath the dignity of his position to make efforts for himself which otherwise would have been entirely becoming and permissible.

C. A. Gilman of St. Cloud, thinking that the trio might need a compromise candidate, let it be known that he could be made a sacrifice, although he did not go to any excessive labor or expenditure in his preliminary work.

And so the merry war went on until the convention assembled in St. Paul on September 5th.

Hennepin county, with Loren Fletcher in the lead, was the especial champion of McGill, while the 20 votes of Ramsey county stood 16 for Scheffer and 4 for McGill. Merriam was without any home support, which to a man without financial resources would have presaged defeat. Scheffer had only a broken delegation. John S. Pillsbury, as chairman of the state central committee, called the convention to order, and William Hodgson of Dakota county, a Scheffer man, nominated J. L. Gibbs for temporary chairman. Fred Hooker of Minneapolis, a McGill man, seconded the nomination, and Gibbs was chosen unanimously.

Gibbs was seated in the rear of the hall, wearing his usual rural and unsophisticated look, so that perhaps it is not surprising that when he started to go to the platform a policeman, who had been employed to preserve order, grabbed him by the arm and told him to keep away and not to disturb the convention. He was finally introduced to the policeman, after which he was permitted to take his seat as temporary chairman, and subsequently was chosen as permanent chairman without being arrested a second time.

One of the first episodes was a resolution excluding proxies unless the party resided in the county which was represented. This resolution passed, but it cut both ways. C. B. Buckman of Little Falls, who was supporting Merriam, had a proxy from Wadena county,

Library of Congress

while Frank Davis of Minneapolis was due to represent Olmstead county, and Freeman P. Lane, also of Minneapolis, was due to come from Wright county. But all were excluded. It took but a few minutes to appoint the usual committees, 199 after which oratory from Frank Davis and Ignatius Donnelly was in order. Donnelly did not assume to be a full-fledged Republican at that time, but advised the convention to stand in with the Farmers' Alliance.

A recess until 3 o'clock p. m. then followed.

When the convention assembled in the afternoon the committee on credentials was unable to report owing to the large number of contests, which among the multitude of candidates required great care in settling. Chairman Gibbs, with commendable impartiality, had given McGill, Scheffer and Merriam each five men on the credentials committee, which rendered it still more difficult to come to a determination. A recess was accordingly taken till evening, at which time the committee reported the names of 450 delegates, and for a wonder the report was adopted without a fight on the floor of the convention.

Then the platform committee was not ready. The late Gordon E. Cole was the head of that committee, and he was in favor of a tariff for revenue only, which, while it might be heresy in the Republican party at this time, was at that time accepted by a great many as the proper thing.

Ex-Governor Pillsbury wanted to proceed and nominate the ticket without the platform, but this produced strenuous opposition, and the motion was voted down by 268 to 160. Evidently with a view of having time enough the next day, the convention then adjourned its evening session until 9 a. m. The first business of the second day was the report of the platform, which was very weak on the tariff question. The unique feature of the platform was couched in these words:

It points with pride to the pure and clean administration of Gov. A. R. McGill.

Library of Congress

Notwithstanding this declaration in the platform the convention turned about and cut McGill's throat from ear to ear.

Balloting for governor was then in order, and the first ballot was voted to be informal. There were 448 votes cast, 225 being necessary for a choice, the ballot standing:

200

Merriam 158

McGill 149

Scheffer 116

Gilman 17

T. B. Clement 8

The second ballot was designed to be formal, but there was so much confusion that General Jennison declared it should be made informal and carried his point. The only change it showed was 4 of McGill's vote going to Merriam.

There then followed four formal ballots, which tell the story of the convention and can better be described in the condensed form of the following table.

First.	Second.	Third.	Fourth.	Merriam	169	178	212	270	McGill	138	114	24	Scheffer	106	78
				96	72	Gilman	28	53	110	101					

On the first ballot Clement received 8 and on the third 1. W. W. Braden received 4 votes on the second and third formal ballots; with these exceptions all the votes are recorded in the table above. After the second ballot the Hennepin county delegation tried the dangerous experiment of swapping horses while crossing the stream. Fletcher gave the signal to change from McGill to Gilman, which accounted for Gilman's vote springing up so rapidly and McGill's disappearing. The only result of this was to hasten Merriam's

Library of Congress

nomination. His success was inevitable from the start unless McGill and Scheffer could combine their forces, and when the McGill men broke to Gilman instead of to Scheffer it was equivalent to saying to Merriam, "Come and take it," and he did.

When the third ballot showed Merriam only needed 12 more votes to secure the nomination his adherents went wild with joy, and wilder still when the fourth and last formal ballot did the business.

As the methods resorted to to secure that nomination were a matter of such common notoriety at the time, and not only publicly talked of but publicly criticised in the newspapers, it does not seem improper to any of the parties in interest to allude to them here.

While at this late day it might be difficult to prove a great many things, at the time when that convention was held proof was abundant and most publicly stated that delegates directly sold their votes by counties. Some of the developments were due to the fact that the chairman of a county delegation would represent the bunch and make the trade and then fail to tote fair in the dividend, which caused almost endless quarrels in the delegations when the dividends came to be declared.

This was a lesson in Minnesota politics which certainly ought to be a warning. If Governor Merriam could have quietly waited two years longer until McGill had had his second term, he could have become governor almost without opposition. There is probably no character who has ever been prominent in Minnesota politics who better illustrates the maxim that "haste makes waste" than that of ex-Gov. William R. Merriam.

I have only very briefly and incidentally touched upon this matter because I do not wish to revive so disgracefully an unpleasant affair, but it would be difficult to write anything approximating a truthful history of Minnesota politics without allusion to the newspaper

Library of Congress

comments and the developments of that campaign, and I make the allusion absolutely as a matter of duty and without the elaboration which the reports elicited at the time.

The vote at the fall election stood:

Merriam (Republican) 134,355

E. M. Wilson (Democrat) 110,251

— — — Harrison (Prohibitionist) 17,026

Mr. Merriam's majority over both 7,078

Up to that date this was the most interesting convention ever held in the state, and especially startling owing to the methods resorted to for success.

202

OBSERVATION THIRTY.

C. K. Davis' First Election to the Senate.

After Senator McMillan's election to the United States senate, in 1875, Gov. C. K. Davis, who was one of the defeated candidates, quietly served out his gubernatorial term and retired from office Jan. 7, 1876. He could have had a renomination and re-election for governor, but he positively declined, and at the end of his single term resumed his lucrative law practice, and apparently laid aside political ambition. He was prominent in political campaigns, in speaking for his party, but aside from that gave no sign that he was in politics. With a patience which few men have who possess political ambition, he bided his time, and knowing that St. Paul could not have two senators made no effort to secure the place which became vacant by Windom's resignation to enter Garfield's cabinet. McMillan was granted a re-election without serious opposition, albeit there was opposition as will appear elsewhere, though it did not prove to be very serious.

Library of Congress

When McMillan's twelve years in the senate was approaching its completion, Ex-Governor Davis again appeared in the political arena. In the state campaign of 1886 it was well understood that the senatorial question was one of the issues, and the unanimity in behalf of Davis was remarkable. Almost every Republican paper in the state was in his favor, and while United States senators cannot be elected by the people, as they ought to be, Mr. Davis' selection came about as near an expression of the popular choice at that time as can be expected under the present system of choosing senators.

203

The legislature met on the 4th of January, 1887, and on the evening of the 6th the Republican caucus was held to nominate a candidate for senator. The caucus was called to order by M. D. Daniels of Olmstead, and S. G. Comstock of Moorhead was selected chairman. Senator McMillan had come out from Washington and was in the city, probably with a lingering hope that there might be an opportunity for a third term, but he had the sagacity to discover that it was useless to make the contest. Consequently, as soon as the caucus was organized the following letter was read:

St. Paul, January 6.

A. K. Finseth:

My dear Senator: My name having been mentioned as a candidate for re-election to the United States senate, I desire to thank you for your earnest support, and beg to request you at the caucus of Republican senators and representatives to be held to-night to withdraw my name from the consideration of that body.

Yours truly, S. J. R. McMILLAN.

There was really no doubt of the result before, but this made the success of Davis very easy. There were 94 Republicans present in the caucus and 9 absent. M. J. Daniels

Library of Congress

nominated Davis, and he received 93 votes to one for Gordon E. Cole, cast by C. S. Crandall of Owatonna.

The event of the evening was the speech of Ignatius Donnelly, which followed the nomination. Donnelly had been wandering after strange gods since his defeat for Congress in 1868, had run for Congress on the Democratic and People's tickets in 1878, had affiliated with the Farmers' Alliance, and there was great rejoicing in the Republican camp over his supposed return to the fold. It is not surprising, therefore, that there were loud calls for Donnelly, partly from a desire to hear him, as he was always an entertaining speaker, but perhaps still more largely from a desire to publicly commit him to the party. Mr. Donnelly responded with a very entertaining speech, in which he endorsed Davis cordially, and there the caucus ended. Twelve days intervened between the caucus and the election, but this time there was no talk of bringing a new candidate into the 204 field, and Davis was as secure in the place when the caucus adjourned as when the vote was taken in the legislature. The ballot was taken in the respective branches of the legislature on the 18th. In the senate the vote stood Davis 33, Michael Doran 14; in the house it was Davis 70, Doran 26, Ara Barton 2.

On the 19th the legislature met in joint session to hear the reading of the votes cast in the branches separately the day before, and Davis was then formally declared elected to the senate for the term of six years, beginning March 4, 1887.

After this had been done a committee was appointed to wait on Senator Davis and notify him of the result. He soon appeared and made a very graceful acceptance speech, during which he took occasion to publicly recognize the service the state press had rendered him—a service which I have reason to know he appreciated to the day of his death.

"I cannot let this occasion pass," he said, "without acknowledging my obligation to my friends, and especially to the press of the state. That the people's voice spoke through this oracle of popular opinion makes my obligation to it none the less, and I here tender my

Library of Congress

thanks for an advocacy which is so often spoken in the language of personal affection as to touch my heart and establish a lasting resting place in my memory.”

In view of the present sentiment of the Republican party on protection, it is peculiar that the slight opposition there was to Davis' election was due to his having made protection speeches during the campaign. Senator Daniel alluded to this in a semi-apologetic manner when he nominated Davis in the caucus, declaring that his speeches during the campaign had not been objectionable or outside of party lines.

On Nov. 20, 1886, which was some days after the election, the Pioneer Press made this comment:

“The disposition manifested everywhere throughout the state to hold Governor Davis to a strict accountability for the high tariff bias apparently revealed in his speeches during the late campaign is gratifying evidence of an awakened public opinion on that subject.

We have reached a pass in Minnesota where high tariff opinions are heresy in the view of the mass of thoughtful and intelligent voters.

205

“High tariff bias” being a sin, “high tariff opinion,” heresy in the Republican party sounds quite odd in the light of to-day; but I record the time when it was permissible, as a matter of history.

Senator Davis was given his second term by a re-election in 1893, when he narrowly escaped defeat. He was elected for the third time in 1899 with absolute unanimity, but death cut short his brilliant career in November, 1900. Up to date no other Minnesota senator has been three times elected, but Knute Nelson is yet to be heard from.

206

OBSERVATION THIRTY-ONE.

The Defeat of Hon. Wm. Windom for the Senate by Hon. D. M. Sabin.

In the winter of 1883, Senator William Windom was a candidate for re-election to the senate. He had served one term previously, had been a member of President Garfield's cabinet and was serving out a sub-term in the senate, which would expire the 4th of March, 1883. He and his friends were very confident of success. Windom himself felt that he was doing the state a favor in allowing them to elect him again. He accordingly decided that he would remain in his seat in the senate and let the legislature do the work. The Pioneer Press, which was his especial champion, came out and commended him in the highest terms for the dignity of his position in declining to come on and engage in the scramble. In the same article that paper berated Congressman Mark H. Dunnell of the First district because he was in the field, with headquarters at one of the hotels, as a candidate.

It was really Windom's controversy with Dunnell which led to Windom's defeat, though Dunnell did not loom up formidably as a candidate himself. As politics go, no one could blame Dunnell for taking a hand in the fight. He lived in the first congressional district and had served four terms in Congress, and began to feel that he had a life tenure on the office, when Senator Windom, who also lived in the first district, went out of his way, in the summer of 1882, to defeat Dunnell for renomination for Congress. He did this on the theory that Dunnell had senatorial aspirations, and he thought to kill him off. But it proved to be a case of a man "hoist by his own petard," or that of

"A gun well aimed at duck or plover, Kicked back and knocked the owner over."

207

Windom succeeded in defeating Dunnell for the renomination, and gave the nomination to Milo White. As the sequel proved, Dunnell's term and Windom's term both expired the same day, March 4, 1883.

Library of Congress

Windom had done some impolitic things. He had sold his residence in Winona and built him a fine house in Washington,—which to the rural mind gave the impression that he was getting rich on a salary of \$5,000 a year. In fact it had been given out that he never intended to return to the state when he retired from public life, and this, too, did not aid him any.

While Dunnell was by no means all of the opposition to Windom, he was the central figure around which Windom's opponents rallied, meeting at Dunnell's headquarters for their conferences and for the formation of their plots. The first move of the opposition to Windom was to keep as many Republicans from going into caucus as possible. This proved quite a success. There were 110 Republicans in the legislature, and only 62 went into the caucus. So that while the legislature was overwhelmingly Republican, less than a majority of the legislature were bound to support Windom. The caucus to nominate a senator was held on the evening of Jan. 11, 1883. At first there were 20 senators present and 39 representatives, a total of 59; but two or three more drifted in, so that the real strength of the caucus was 62. Everything was very harmonious in that caucus, for the anti-Windom men all remained away. Hon. J. B. Gilfillan of Minneapolis nominated Mr. Windom in the caucus, and he received 60 votes, after which the nomination was made unanimous, and the caucus adjourned.

The first vote in the legislature was January 17th. On that vote, in the senate Windom received 23, Gordon E. Cole 5, Dunnell 4, and Thomas Wilson, nominee of the Democratic caucus, 2. There were scattering 6. In the house Windom received 46, Wilson 25, Cole 5, Kindred 4, Dunnell 6, D. A. Dickinson 3, C. K. Davis 2, Hubbard 2, scattering 4, absent or not voting 6. This was not a very auspicious opening for Windom, and, to those who understand politics, presaged his defeat. Of course, as he had not received a majority in either branch of the legislature, there was nothing to do but to go into joint session the 20th next day and resume the balloting. On January 18th two ballots were taken in joint

Library of Congress

session, Windom receiving 65 and 61, Wilson 37 and 34, the remainder of the votes being scattered among the various names already mentioned, and others.

On January 18th there were three ballots, Windom receiving 58, 57 and 55, showing that his strength was gradually being dissipated. On the 19th there were four ballots, Windom receiving 58, 51, 51 and 50. The decline in Windom's vote was ominous, and his rural friends saw that he was defeated, though it was some time later before they absolutely admitted it. A secret meeting of his friends was held that evening at the Merchants hotel, and an effort was made to bring out John S. Pillsbury as a compromise candidate. But this movement failed, and it was decided instead to telegraph to Windom to come to St. Paul. In spite of the dignity so loudly praised by the Pioneer Press he took the first train, and was in St. Paul on the 22nd. But his presence did not seem to help, for the first day after his arrival his vote fell to 45.

For a partizan newspaper, the Pioneer Press can enact the role of all kinds of a bull in a china shop as well as any paper I have ever known. On January 18th this was illustrated by an editorial which it published. Bear in mind this was the time when it was important that Windom should hold every friend he had, and get a good many more, if he would win. Here is an extract from that editorial:

The choice of the United States senator is committed by law largely to the petty, feeble-minded creatures who usually contribute a large section, and sometimes a majority, of their party in the legislature.

That was enticing for the Windom men. To make it more binding the same editorial followed up with this paragraph:

The results of senatorial elections are largely determined by the success of the action on either side in playing upon the weaknesses, the foibles, the prejudices, the credulities, imbecility or the mercenary littleness of this class of small-potato fools and knaves.

Library of Congress

The conciliatory policy of the Pioneer Press was grand.

If this was not enough to induce the recalcitrant friends of Windom to come back to the fold, this paragraph was added:

209

If Mr. Windom's friends have the firmness and tenacity of purpose to hold together to the number of 50, or even 45, votes, there is still a good fighting chance to win. There are probably some one or two dozen of these ineffably dirty creatures in the legislature who have been waiting to be bought.

Harmony with a big "H" was evidently abroad.

The balloting went on day by day, and in the joint convention of January 25th, W. H. Grimshaw, who was a member of the legislature, read this pronunciamento signed by himself and seven others:

All Republican members of the legislature who believe the election of Senator Windom undesirable are requested to meet at the Metropolitan this evening for the purpose of concerting a plan of action in the interests of the Republican party during the present senatorial contest.

W. H. GRIMSHAW, EVER SAMPSON, H. A. FINCH, G. G. HARTLEY, J. VAN DYKE, W. P. SERGEANT, T. PAULSON, H. ANDERSON.

In response to this call 45 assembled, and others in sympathy were accounted for up to the number of 52. The caucus was chiefly devoted to rejoicing over Windom's defeat, which all saw was inevitable, and every man in that caucus was opposed to him. No plan was evolved, and probably it was not expected that any plan would be. I was not permitted to enter the caucus, but I was on the outskirts, and the only official report that I could get of what they did was a facetious one, stating that they passed the following resolution:

Library of Congress

Resolved , That we are the best crowd of stayers that ever struck St. Paul.

There was not much change in the balloting, Windom holding between 40 and 50 votes right along.

Meantime there were rumors of Sabin being brought into the field. On the 4th of January, before the legislature met, I had mentioned the fact in the *Globe*, which I was then publishing, that Sabin might be a possible contingency. This was the first public mention of his name in this connection. On the 14th of January I quoted in the *Globe* this sentence from the *Minneapolis Journal*:

The Democrats are said to be agreeable to the election of D. M. Sabin.

And to this I added:

And a good many others are agreeable besides the Democrats.

Still there was no formal movement to bring a dark horse into the race at that time.

As the days ran on I foresaw that the only safety and success of the anti-Windom movement was to hurry it up, and the consequence was, as I was liberal minded, ready to advise anybody and everybody, I published in the *Globe* of January 29th a ten-line editorial under the head of "Concentrate," which read as follows:

The *Globe* has been able to supply Mr. Windom with some good advice, and it is now willing to supply his opponents with some wise counsel.

The advice of the *Globe* to the antis is to concentrate at once. Delays are dangerous. There should and can be an election tomorrow.

As the election actually did take place within three days, I think I can claim that my advice bore some fruit. I reported the joint sessions of the legislature for my own paper, and on

Library of Congress

January 31st there was an unusually large attendance of visitors. In my preface to the proceedings I said this:

The renewal of interest resulted from the announcement by the Globe that Hon. D. M. Sabin, whose name had been frequently mentioned as a prospective dark horse in the scramble for the prize, was to be brought out and voted for, thus antagonizing and disrupting the Windom forces. The confidence expressed by thus organizing the break for Sabin had created an impression in many quarters that it was very possible an election would result, and it is the weakness of human nature to wish to be on hand to speed the rising king and spurn the defeated.

Bear in mind that all that I have quoted was prior to Sabin's name having been mentioned in the legislature in the ballot, though there were plenty of scattering votes for others.

211

The plan of the Sabin men was to get the Democratic votes to add to the recalcitrant Republicans who refused to support Windom, and thus elect him, the object being not so much to promote Sabin as to defeat Windom.

The Democrats held a caucus on the evening of the day my comments appeared, and decided that they would support a Republican as against Windom when their vote would elect. They fixed the figure at 35, and voted that when any Republican got 35 votes as against Windom, the Democrats should be released from the caucus obligations to go as they pleased.

On the 31st of January, two days after my brief "Concentrate" editorial, Sabin's name was presented without any formality in the ballot in the joint convention. He was voted for on two ballots, receiving 17 on the first ballot and 22 on the second.

In my paper the next day I had an elaborate review of the situation which perhaps is most briefly told by the head-lines, which were as follows:

Library of Congress

Sable Sabin—The Honorable Member from Washington County Looms Up in Formidable Shape—The New Deal Developed.

The next day there were 7 ballots, Sabin receiving on the first 4 ballots, 19, 22, 32 and 33. J. N. Castle of Stillwater was a Democratic senator, but he was a townsman and warm personal friend of Mr. Sabin and anxious for an opportunity to go to him. When, therefore, Sabin had 33 votes on the fourth ballot, it became evident that he would have 35 or more on the next ballot. When Mr. Castle's name was reached on the roll-call on the fifth ballot, he explained his vote in the following speech:

The Democratic caucus adopted a resolution pledging the individual members of their party to stand by their candidate, Hon. Thomas Wilson, until some Republican other than Mr. Windom should receive 35 votes, when such alliance should end, and each member be allowed to vote as to him seemed best under the existing circumstances, and the Hon. D. M. Sabin having received more than 35 votes I now avail myself of the privilege conferred by the caucus and change my vote from Wilson to Sabin.

Castle had been delegated as the Democratic leader to determine when the Democrats should change, and as Sabin had over 35 when Castle's name was reached he gave the signal for Sabin. The fifth ballot showed 55, and then more of the Democrats came 212 dropping into line. The sixth ballot gave Sabin 63, and the seventh and last ballot 81, the exact number to give him the election.

Of course there was the usual turbulence and applause, both on account of the joy of those who wished to defeat Windom and the pleasure of all to think that the great contest was over.

Hon. Loren Fletcher of Minneapolis was speaker of the house at the time, and in the roll call his name came last as "Mr. Speaker." He had been one of Windom's most stalwart and pronounced supporters, voting for him every ballot without fail. It is related of Fletcher

Library of Congress

that when the roll call was in progress on the last ballot he watched it with great intensity, as he was at that moment, whatever he might have been before, at heart a Sabin man, knowing that Windom's cause was hopeless. Before his name was reached, the last one upon the roll, he is said to have leaned over to the clerk of the convention and asked for Sabin's vote. The clerk told him it was 81. Then the next utterance of the clerk was "Mr. Speaker," to which Mr. Fletcher promptly responded, "William Windom." He had found that Sabin was elected without him, and he remained loyal to Windom to the last—on the record. I do not say this to intimate that Fletcher was in the least disloyal to his friend Windom. He had nothing to do with bringing Sabin out, but if Sabin had had only 80 votes when his name was reached, I think his would have been the 81st.

The balloting consumed a period of sixteen days, during which time 30 ballots in all were cast.

Mr. Windom was, perhaps, the most mortified man ever within the boundaries of Minnesota. When the fifth ballot on the last day showed that Sabin's nomination was inevitable, Senators Mart Chandler of Red Wing and J. B. Gilfillan of Minneapolis sent a special messenger with a note to Mr. Windom at his hotel, asking him to come to the capitol and accept the defeat gracefully. They had been his most stalwart friends during the entire fight. Windom never even replied to the note, but immediately packed his grip, and by the time the legislature had adjourned he had taken a train out of town. By accident, Capt. T. J. Sheehan of Albert Lea walked with him to the depot, 213 but other than that he had no companion. He had not thanked his loyal friends or bade anybody good-bye. Mr. Windom literally shook the dust of Minnesota from his feet, and never returned to the state as a resident thereafter, meeting with a tragic death at a banquet in New York City on Jan. 29, 1890. He was secretary of the treasury, and had just made a speech at the banquet when he sat down and in a few minutes his earthly career was ended.

Library of Congress

On February 2nd, the day after Windom's defeat, the Pioneer Press made this very truthful comment:

The one fatal blunder of Mr. Windom's campaign was committed by himself in his gratuitous persecution of Mr. Dunnell, and he has no one else to blame that he reaped the whirlwind which he had sown.

That was eminently true.

At the time and since there has been a good deal of talk about Sabin having betrayed Mr. Windom in his own interests. Mr. Sabin has passed beyond the reach of men, but I believe it only just to his memory to say that as a somewhat active participant, and certainly an exceedingly active observer of the events, this does injustice to Mr. Sabin. Mr. Sabin was taken sick the last week of the contest, and it was alleged that his sickness was a sham. I called upon him personally several times during his illness, and believe I am not mistaken in saying that his sickness was absolutely real. If he was simulating he was certainly an expert in that line. He was a member of the legislature at the time and elected as a friend of Mr. Windom. So far as any public act of his is concerned he was his friend. The Pioneer Press which had strongly supported Windom and bitterly assailed his opponents came out the day after the election with an elaborate statement of Mr. Sabin's position, stating that he had conferred with Mr. Windom and talked the matter over of his (Sabin's) being a candidate, assuring Mr. Windom that so long as there was a possible chance for Windom, he (Sabin) would not allow his name to be used, and he did not. The Pioneer Press admitted it, and commended Sabin; and I think I can say, between what I knew and the Pioneer Press combined, if there had been any underhanded plotting on the part 214 of Sabin against his friend Windom, one or the other of us would have known it. I am sure the Pioneer Press would have told it if it had known it, because it was so vindictive towards Windom's opponents, and as I was a law unto myself, telling anything I could find out—and more—I do not think I should have hesitated to make it public either, as I was under no obligation to either side, but simply enjoying the fight immensely. I say this in justice to the

Library of Congress

memory of a man who has gone beyond, because for years afterwards I heard slighting remarks made of Mr. Sabin, and as time goes on they are likely to become permanently fixed in the minds of the public.

While Sabin made his business mistakes, for which he was very severely and perhaps properly criticised, I want to put it on record in cold print that I do not believe the man lives who can prove that he betrayed Mr. Windom in that great contest. Neither do I believe that anyone lives who would not have done exactly as Mr. Sabin did. Windom was hopelessly beaten. Several days before the Pioneer Press had published an editorial which began with these words: "Windom is hopelessly beaten," and if Mr. Sabin had never been born someone other than Mr. Windom would have elected senator at that time. Mr. Dunnell had certainly evened the deal. No one blamed him, for he was pursuing the legitimate course in politics of cutting the throat of a man who had cut his throat.

During the progress of the contest, caucuses were held nightly at Mr. Dunnell's headquarters at the Merchants hotel, and also at General Sanborn's office. A caucus was held at General Sanborn's office the evening before the regular caucus which demonstrated Windom was beaten, the only trouble was to decide to whom the prize should be given. The whole issue at these caucuses was simply to brace up the anti-Windom men, and make them renew their pledges that under no circumstances and at no time would they ever support Mr. Windom. It was that sort of a combination which defeated Senator Wilkinson in 1865, and it was the same which defeated Senator Windom in 1883. But Mr. Windom had a new lease of political life in spite of the defeat, as is shown by other chapters in this book.

215

OBSERVATION THIRTY-TWO.

Donnelly's Contest in Congress for Washburn's Seat.

Library of Congress

It is a great undertaking to contest a seat in Congress with a man who holds the certificate—a statement which, I am sure, Ignatius Donnelly would verify if he was living. Donnelly and W. D. Washburn had been opponents in the congressional election of 1878.

Washburn, on the face of the returns, had 3,013 majority over Donnelly, and, of course, received the certificate of election. Donnelly employed O'Brien & Eller of St. Paul, as his attorneys, and gave notice of a contest; Washburn employed Bigelow, Flandrau & Clark, Judge Flandrau being the one actively in charge of the case. There were the usual charges of fraudulent voting, intimidation, bribery, etc., and a big volume of evidence was taken. One special point made by Donnelly was that in seven precincts in Minneapolis the ballots were numbered. The legislature had passed a law the previous winter providing that the election judges should, in recording the voter's name, number it and put a corresponding number on the ballot. This practically destroyed the secrecy of the ballot, as it would only be necessary to compare the number of the voter and the number of the ballot to ascertain how every man voted. At the spring election in St. Paul John B. Brisbin had brought suit to prevent the numbering of ballots, and just before the fall election in 1878 Judge Brill had decided the law unconstitutional. The matter was still pending in the supreme court, but until that decision the finding of the lower court stood. There was no numbering of ballots in St. Paul and none in Minneapolis, except in the seven precincts. The seven precincts were largely occupied by working men, and 216 Donnelly assumed that the numbering of the ballots was to intimidate them from voting for him. They gave, in the aggregate, 1,760 majority for Washburn. If Donnelly had lost in the contest outside of Hennepin he would not have had the temerity to contest, but as in the great Republican district of 37 counties he had come into Hennepin county with 472 majority, he could not resist the temptation to contest, especially as his case would come before a Democratic Congress.

The contest was a long process. The Congress to which Washburn was elected did not meet until December, 1879, a year after the election. Testimony had been taken throughout the district, and the next move was to get it before Congress. William M.

Library of Congress

Springer, a Democrat of Illinois, was chairman of the committee on elections, and Van H. Manning of Mississippi the next in order of rank. The testimony was referred to a subcommittee, of which Manning was chairman. The matter dragged along slowly, but in March, 1880, the majority of the sub-committee, headed by Manning, voted to report to the main committee that Donnelly was elected by 230, though the official canvass had given Washburn 3,013. The minority of the subcommittee, headed by J. Warren Keifer of Ohio reported in favor of Washburn. Manning's report was accompanied by two resolutions, one ousting Washburn and one seating Donnelly. Keifer also had two resolutions, one retaining Washburn and the other rejecting Donnelly. On April 1, 1880, two votes were taken in the full committee, the committee consisting of 15 members. When the first vote was taken there were two pairs, and only 11 votes actually cast. These stood six to unseat Washburn to five against. Without the pairs it would have stood eight to seven for unseating. On the second resolution to seat Donnelly there was one pair and one absentee, and the vote stood eight for seating Donnelly to four against. So far the skies were bright for Donnelly, but there was a cloud in the sky. While the matter had not been made public, it seemed that early in March an anonymous letter had been sent to Mr. Springer offering to pay his wife \$5,000 if he would support Washburn. Springer was absent in New York when the letter came and his wife opened it. It read as follows:

217

Washington, March 4th.

Sir: If you will keep Washburn in his seat in spite of the Democrats, we will pay Mrs. S. \$5,000. Get the thing quashed at once.

Respectfully,

When Springer returned from New York he not only found the anonymous letter, but also a lengthy letter from H. H. Finley, a friend of and attorney for Donnelly. The opening sentences of Finley's letter, dated two days after the anonymous epistle, were as follows:

Library of Congress

Washington, March 6, 1880.

I have heard with a great deal of chagrin that you have some doubts as to the expediency of adopting the report of the sub-committee. Not to do this will, I know, leave you open to the severest criticism, and give color of truth to reports which Washburn's friends have most unguardedly set afloat.

Finley was a lawyer who formerly resided in St. Paul, but had left there with an unsavory record. The weakest spot in Donnelly's armour was that he had Finley for his friend. Springer compared the handwriting of the anonymous letter with that of Finley's, and concluded that Finley wrote them both. The theory was that Finley sought by the anonymous letter to cast the imputation that Washburn was trying to bribe him in order to use it as a club, as intimated in his letter of the 6th, to keep him (Springer) from voting against Donnelly. Naturally, Springer was mad. He had intended to keep his own counsel, but before his return Mrs. Springer had shown the anonymous letter to an intimate friend, George W. Julian of Indiana, and he, being a friend of Mr. Donnelly, had informed him. In this manner the existence of the fatal letter became known to Manning, who was pushing Donnelly's cause in the committee. Springer turned against Donnelly, and bad blood grew up between him and Manning, until finally Springer told the story in the house, and accused Finley of writing the anonymous letter. He did not ask for an investigating committee, but he placed Donnelly, because Finley was his friend, in a very unpleasant position.

On the 8th day of April Donnelly wrote the committee of elections asking to have the authorship of the anonymous letter 218 investigated. On the 17th of April the house ordered a committee of seven, with John G. Carlisle of Kentucky, chairman, to investigate the anonymous letter. Donnelly declared that he thought William S. King, whom old settlers will always recognize as plain "Bill" King, or C. W. Johnson, Washburn's secretary, had written the letter. He telegraphed to St. Paul for samples of their handwriting, but soon dropped the matter, so far as Johnson was concerned, to follow it up with King. In

Library of Congress

order to supply the committee with some of his handwriting King furnished them with this characteristic letter:

Minneapolis, May 4th.

Hon. J. G. Carlisle,

Dear Sir: Your telegraphic offer to permit me to appear before the investigating committee of which you are chairman, to testify in the matter of Mr. Donnelly's anonymous letter to Mr. Springer is received. Thanking you for the courtesy thus extended, I respectfully decline to avail myself of this privilege you offer me. I have in the course of my life had many hard things said against me, but I thank God for the sincere hope I yet entertain that I have not sunk to so great depth that it is necessary for me to deny anything that Ignatius Donnelly may say concerning me, even though he may be reinforced by the opinions of a thousand paid or expert asses, who are so quick to discover in Donnelly's letter to Springer a fac-simile of my handwriting.

As I have just telegraphed you, I shall with great respect and alacrity respond to any official summons your committee may be pleased to send me.

Again thanking you for the courtesy extended me, I remain,

Very respectfully yours, WILLIAM S. KING.

This was not all the handwriting which King furnished. He wrote Donnelly a seven-page document, letter-sheet size, which was exceedingly lively reading, and suggested that he supply that letter to the committee. Mr. Donnelly complied with this suggestion, which, considering the extreme personality of the epistle, was very surprising. Though that letter was printed at the time, when the Pioneer Press unwittingly reproduced it, 12 or 13 years later, Donnelly promptly sued them for \$100,000 libel, and obtained a verdict for \$1. His views had evidently changed concerning it with the lapse of years.

All interest in the election contest was submerged by the momentous one as to who wrote the Springer letter. Finley went on the stand and swore point blank that he knew nothing whatever of the matter. He produced eight witnesses to testify that they thought he did not write it, but none of them were experts. The preponderance of expert testimony was very decidedly against Finley, and none of them implicated King. The investigation was most elaborate and exhaustive, making a volume of 279 pages, besides 26 pages of fac-simile writing. The 26 pages included the anonymous letter of March 4th, Finley's letter of March 6th, King's letter which Donnelly supplied the committee, and several pages analyzing letter by letter the anonymous production as contrasted with similar letter of the alphabet in Finley's effusion of March 6th. It would be difficult to conceive of anything more searching.

Though King declined to go voluntarily, which he was justified in doing, as it would have been at his own expense, he was duly subpoenaed and promptly responded. The crossfire between King and Donnelly when he was on the witness stand would be about as racy a chapter as Minnesotans could have supplied to them.

On the 16th of June, 1880, the last day of that session of Congress, Mr. Carlisle arose in the house and submitted the following statement from the committee appointed to investigate the anonymous letter:

I am authorized to say that the committee, after considering all the testimony given by experts and others, has unanimously come to the conclusion that the weight of testimony shows that the anonymous letter was written and sent by H. H. Finley. So far as the majority is concerned, it does not find that Donnelly had any connection, personally or otherwise, in sending or writing the anonymous letter. Mr. Finley was the attorney and friend of Mr. Donnelly, but the committee does not find that Donnelly had any knowledge of the anonymous letter.

Library of Congress

Mr. Manning, from the committee on elections, followed Carlisle with a report saying that five of the committee favored unseating Washburn and seating Donnelly. Mr. Keifer from the same committee reported that seven out of 15 favored the 220 retention of Washburn, and 10 out of 15 were opposed to giving Donnelly the seat. The whole matter was re-committed to the committee without debate, and the house adjourned sine die.

The anonymous letter episode had very materially changed the situation in the committee on elections as it existed April 1st. If Donnelly had any previous chance it was ruined. Donnelly put in a bill for \$5,000 for his expenses, and Washburn asked for \$4,000. The next report of the committee allowed Donnelly \$3,500, and Washburn \$2,500. As Washburn held the seat and salary, he had the advantage financially. The report of the election committee made 278 pages, and the reports of the two committees aggregated 557 pages, besides the 26 pages of fac-simile. If the contest had no other result it aided in increasing the national debt.

221

OBSERVATION THIRTY-THREE.

W. R. Merriam's Election as Speaker.

While Ex-Gov. William R. Merriam was elected to the lower branch of the State Legislature in 1882, and served in the one of 1883, he was then but a tyro in politics, and really did not appear as any particular factor in affairs. In 1886 he was again elected to the house, and this time he set his mark for the speakership, possibly thinking it was due him by inheritance, as his father had been speaker in 1870 and 1871. At all events, when the legislature met in January, 1887, there was a big ruction on the speakership. Ignatius Donnelly was a member of the house, and though he professed to be in sympathy with the Farmers' Alliance, he was recognized as a Republican, and Merriam's great stake was to secure the support of Donnelly. While Donnelly, when living, was violently assailed by political enemies, there was undoubtedly much injustice done him. He loved political

Library of Congress

power, and was always ready to use his position to secure that when he would spurn the offer of anything else. When, therefore, Merriam informed him that he could have such committee positions as he wished, if he (Merriam) was chosen speaker, Mr. Donnelly did what many another man would have done, and what is repeated every session of the legislature, supported the man who would give him the desired committee positions. This was shrewd tactics on the part of Merriam, and bore fruit. The legislature was due to meet on January 4th, and Donnelly called a Farmers' Alliance caucus at 10:30 a. m., January 3d. Samuel Reese of Kandiyohi county 222 presided, and when the caucus had been organized it developed that its object was to call the candidates for speaker before them to have them define their positions relative to the treatment which should be accorded to the farmers. George W. Buffum, of Steele County, William Lee, of Todd County, and William R. Merriam, of St. Paul, were the candidates. Buffum was first brought in, and, after a very ungracious introduction, said:

If I am elected speaker I will endeavor to treat everybody fairly and satisfy the members that I am in sympathy with them.

Merriam was next introduced, and his *sauviter in modo*, fortiter in re was at once apparent. He made the audience happy immediately by saying, "I feel more than grateful for the opportunity of being here," and added several more sentences indicating that he was rejoiced at meeting his long-lost brothers. Having thus made the farmers of the legislature feel that he was delighted to meet them on an equality, he added:

I am aware that the warehouse and grain laws will secure much consideration, and I am free to say that if you select me as your presiding officer I will see that you are fairly and equitably represented on the committees.

Mr. Lee followed, stating that he was a Republican and did not exactly see why he should explain, but finally vouchsafed to say:

Library of Congress

If I am elected, I will give the farmers a fair representation on the committees.

This ended the catechism, and Merriam had caught the crowd.

The call for the Republican caucus was not limited to political parties, all the farmers in the legislature being invited.

Tom Lucas, of Minneapolis, who used to farm a good deal—with his mouth—was there, and by asking a question he gave Mr. Donnelly an opportunity to say that Farmers' Alliance men could properly go into the Republican caucus. That was the whole meat of the meeting, and Tom unwittingly brought it out. It was to keep the farmers from bolting that the "Farmers' Caucus" had been invented. The conclusion of the meeting was thus reported in the Pioneer Press of January 4th:

"John M. Powers of Rice then made a violent speech, in which he charged that in the caucus now going on for speakership, members were being bought up. He was called down by a member, and the chair decided that Mr. Powers was out of order, and he subsided."

The same evening the Republicans held their caucus, with D. A. Morrison, of Olmstead, chairman, and Leo Lum, of Crow Wing, secretary. E. Mattson, of Wilkin, nominated Merriam for speaker, and H. F. Barker, of Isanti, and E. G. Rogers, of St. Paul, seconded.

At this stage of the proceedings William E. Lee arose and said:

My name has been mentioned in connection with the speakership. The time has come when any man's ambition must be a secondary consideration. The time has come when our 40,000 Republican majority is reduced to a beggarly 2,500. I am here to say, that this result has been brought about by bad management. I believe that to elect any man speaker who in the past has shown no sympathy with the great questions of the day,

Library of Congress

would be a mistake. I desire to withdraw my name and to present the name of George W. Buffum of Steele county.

Then followed the vote. There were 66 present, necessary to choice, 34. Merriam received 47, Buffum 17, scattering 2. Of course, that was equivalent to an election. The next day in the house Merriam received 71 votes, to 30 cast for E. T. Champion, of Blue Earth County.

The St. Paul Dispatch of that date, Jan, 4, 1887, under the same ownership as at present, had this to say of the result:

William R. Merriam is elected speaker. He has been elected against the opposition of the Dispatch, as he has been against the clearly expressed will of not only the Republicans of this state, but as 224 against the wishes of seven-eighths of the men who cast their ballots in our election last fall.

The influences and interests which Mr. Merriam represents in public life have been spurned by the people of Minnesota.

There is nothing which the Dispatch has said either against Mr. Merriam's fitness, against the wisdom of his selection, or in favor of any of his competitors, that we do not repeat and reiterate.

When the speaker announced his committees, Mr. Donnelly appeared as chairman of the committee on railroads, and as a member of the judiciary, educational, and grain and warehouse inspection committees. He was entitled to the positions for services rendered the speaker in advance, and, as politics goes, had secured them legitimately; but his committee positions enabled him to prove such a "bull in a china shop" that so long as he lived the Republicans never thereafter permitted him to be ranked as one of them lest he might hold another caucus.

It can truly be said of him, however, that he gave the subsequent Gov. Merriam his start in political life, as it was the speakership, combined with other influences not necessary to recount at this stage of my book, which gave him the governorship a little later.

225

OBSERVATION THIRTY-FOUR.

The Brass Kettle Campaign.

"The Brass Kettle Campaign" of 1878 was one of the great historical events of the state. Dr. J. H. Stewart, of St. Paul, had been elected to Congress in 1876 by the Republicans, to represent the Third Congressional District. By party usage which had become so fixed as to be an unwritten law, he was entitled to a second term. W. D. Washburn, of Minneapolis, who was first a candidate for Congress in 1868, but withdrew when the split in the party occurred, had been patiently waiting for the next opportunity, and ten years in a man's life is a good while. He accordingly decided to enter the race to succeed Dr. Stewart, and this venture had the cordial cooperation of Loren Fletcher, who was the chairman of the Republican district committee. It was Mr. Fletcher's services, which his position enabled him to render, that largely determined the result, and it was the failure of Mr. Washburn to reciprocate when Fletcher wanted to run for Congress in 1884, which led to a coldness between these prominent citizens which continued for a number of years.

In accordance with the custom well known in politics, where a competitor is to be "done up," Mr. Fletcher called an early convention, while Congress was still in session, and Dr. Stewart absent in Washington. Possibly there would have been no different result if the convention had been held later, but certainly it gave Mr. Washburn an advantage at the start, and was a serious handicap to Stewart. The convention was called in June, to be held at the Academy of Music, in Minneapolis, on the 10th of July. The apportionment provided 15 226 that there should be one delegate at large from each county, and one for each 250 votes cast for President Hayes in 1876. The state convention and the other

Library of Congress

districts made their basis of apportionment of delegates on the vote for Governor Pillsbury in 1877, instead of the vote for Hayes in 1876. There was, of course, the usual row between St. Paul and Minneapolis, which was intensified by the fact that a Minneapolis man was trying to defeat a St. Paul man when the St. Paul man had had but one term. St. Paul, accordingly, set up two grounds of complaint: one was what they termed a "snap" call, and the other objecting to basing the apportionment on 1876 instead of on 1877. The Pioneer Press, which has thrown a good many firebrands into its party ranks in years gone by, belabored Fletcher and incidentally Washburn over Fletcher's shoulders. Under the district call Ramsey County was entitled to 12 delegates and Hennepin to 24. When the Ramsey County convention met there was blood on the moon, and after vigorous speeches and strong resolutions they decided to put the matter to a test by making it a tie and sending 24 delegates of their own. Ramsey county knew, of course, that it was not entitled to so many, even if it deserved more than 12; but the St. Paul Republicans, if they were to lose the Congressman, were bound to have the fun of a fight. They accordingly went to Minneapolis on the 10th of July, waving their battle-flag. Things looked rather ominous. Knute Nelson of Alexandria was chosen chairman of the convention, and after the usual preliminaries a recess was taken to see if some compromise could not be patched up between the warring factions. It was conceded that Washburn had the convention, and he having lost ten years of his political career owing to one split in the party, neither he nor his friends desired to have any further trouble. Congress had adjourned, and Dr. Stewart had returned home, by this time, but it was too late for him to recoup his shattered political fortunes, even if he ever could have done so. He was very indignant, but this did no particular harm as long as Washburn had the delegates. The Washburn men proposed a conference between the delegations from the two counties, Ramsey 227 and Hennepin. This was held without results, but later a second conference of a portion of each conference brought order out of chaos. This sub-committee consisted on the part of Ramsey County of W. R. Marshall, C. K. Davis, E. F. Drake, R. Barden, and F. Driscoll; on the part of Hennepin County, the committee was R. B. Langdon, C. H. Pettit, J. B. Gilfillan, J. M. Shaw and George H. Keith. The first offer made by Hennepin County

Library of Congress

was to allow each county to have 18 votes. That was reducing Hennepin 6 and increasing Ramsey 6. The Ramsey County men knew that Stewart was lost, and they also knew that Ramsey was not entitled to as large a vote as Hennepin. They had professed all the time to be fighting for the principle of apportionment rather than to get more delegates, and so they refused this proposition. It was finally agreed that Ramsey county should have 12 votes and Hennepin 16, and that in the future all apportionments of delegates should be based on the vote of the previous year. The Hennepin delegates were delighted at the settlement, as it prevented trouble after the nomination.

When the report of the sub-committee was made to the convention after the recess, it was quickly adopted, and there was nothing further to do but to go through the motions of the nomination. J. B. Gilfillan presented the name of Mr. Washburn. Capt. Russell Blakely, of St. Paul, while regretting that Dr. Stewart could not be his own successor, said that he (Stewart) declined to have his name presented, and he accordingly moved that Washburn be nominated unanimously. This was done, though it was not a pleasant dose for St. Paul.

The nomination of Washburn at once brought forward in the public mind the antagonism between Ignatius Donnelly and the Washburn family, and as the district was strongly Republican, none of the dyed-in-the-wool Democrats were anxious to make the race. The Democratic convention was held on the 6th of September, with W. M. Campbell, of Meeker, for chairman, and W. L. Kelly, of St. Paul, as secretary. There was no occasion for quarreling in this convention, as prospects for success were not dangerous. The result of the informal ballot was Donnelly 55, Eugene M. Wilson, of Minneapolis 22 24, H. H. Sibley of St. Paul 7, and W. W. McNair of Minneapolis 5—a total of 91. Mr. McNair promptly withdrew his name, and the first formal ballot stood Donnelly 60, Wilson 18. Thirteen of the hardshells had declined to vote at all rather than vote for Donnelly, because he was not born in the Democratic faith.

Following the nomination of Donnelly, the famous and exciting “brass kettle” campaign occurred. The “brass kettle” was a two-quart brass measure used by buyers for grading

Library of Congress

wheat. It was claimed that the buyers systematically swindled the farmers by the manipulation of the kettle. This was done in the interest of the millers, as alleged, and Mr. Washburn was a miller. It was claimed that by filling the kettle rapidly, by the stroke, and by the manipulation of the scale beam, an adept could make a difference of one or two grades in a load of wheat. In other words, wheat which should grade No. 1 would be graded No. 2 or No. 3, or even worse, according to the conscience of the man who handled the brass kettle.

Of course, I could not see the chance for a fight proceeding without being in it, and there was no contest which has ever occurred in the state in which I ever took a more active part than in the brass kettle affair.

W. L. Banning was chairman of the Donnelly district committee, and I was a member of that committee, as well as the publisher of the Globe at the time. The hard shell Democrats were very much opposed to Donnelly, and with all our efforts the total campaign fund that we could raise was \$600. Even with that small sum it was the most spirited campaign ever seen in the state. The farmers were aroused almost to a riotous pitch, and they had reason to be. Our charges of swindling by the use of the brass kettle were absolutely true, and every farmer who sold a load of wheat that year knew they were true, and voted accordingly. Perhaps no better evidence of their truth can be cited than the fact that the legislature, at its next session, passed a law regulating the use of the brass kettle and so curtailing it that it could no longer be used as a means of swindling the farmers.

The Third district was then enormous in its proportions, 229 embracing the greater part of all the wheat-growing counties in the state. There were 27 counties, as follows: Aitkin, Anoka, Becker, Benton, Big Stone, Carlton, Cass, Chisago, Clay, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hennepin, Isanti, Kanabec, Kittson, Lac qui Parle, Lake, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pine, Polk, Pope, Ramsey, St. Louis, Sherburne, Stearns, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Washington, Wilkin, Wright, Yellow Medicine.

Library of Congress

The district was not only immense geographically, but it contained the great bulk of the Republican vote in the state.

It was a tremendous task to make the canvass, especially as Donnelly did not have the cordial support of the Democrats. Comparatively few took the stump for him, but he made as thorough a canvass as the physical strength of one able-bodied man could do.

In a foolish outburst of zeal I gave my daily paper for the campaign for 25 cents, and sent a canvasser with Donnelly. Every one of his meetings concluded with a speech by my canvasser, calling for subscriptions at the 25-cent rate, and the more I got the worse off I was. They rolled in by the thousand, and I question whether any daily paper up to this date has as many subscribers in those counties as I had at that time. The consequence was that the brass kettle side of the campaign was very thoroughly aired; the farmers took up the cry, and when the votes were counted it was found that, leaving out Hennepin county, Donnelly had carried the district by 472. When it was considered that the Republican majority in the district was over-whelming, the work done is absolutely wonderful, and it was very materially aided by my 25-cent newspaper. That movement, however, involved an expenditure which I would not again incur to elect an angel from heaven to Congress or to defeat a fiend incarnate. And in using these terms I do not intend to apostrophize Donnelly or stigmatize Washburn. One is already waiting for the other at the meeting place, and I will leave them to fight out the rest of the battle themselves, only saying in passing that if I had to do it over again it wouldn't be done. I never took the trouble to figure my loss, but I know it was a good many thousand dollars.

230

In St. Paul many Democrats voted for Washburn, and between 400 and 500 ballots were cast with Donnelly's name erased and no one substituted. The vote in Hennepin county was somewhat startling. Washburn received 6,284 and Donnelly 2,799, giving. Washburn

Library of Congress

3,485 majority in that county, and 3,013 in the district. The country had pitted itself against the city, and the city had won.

As one of the results, however, the next legislature passed a bill making the half-bushel measure the standard to be used in grading, instead of the obnoxious brass kettle. It was provided that by mutual consent a two-quart measure could be used, with such device for filling as might be adopted by the Farmers' Board of Trade. This resulted in placing what was termed the Stacey filler on the market, which was an attachment to the brass kettle, which compelled the filling of the small measure slowly and made the stroke equable.

In 1885, by revision of the warehouse and grain laws, the law of 1879 was repealed, and the brass kettle is still in use simply by mutual consent, though it has never been manipulated since 1878 as it was during that year.

I have always congratulated myself that the "brass kettle campaign" made a good many millions of dollars difference to the farmers of Minnesota as the years rolled on; and at the same time I am free to say that my philanthropy is not of such a thrilling and violent nature that I would make another campaign of the kind for the farmers or anybody else. It is an illustration of doing good by accident and being sorry for it afterwards.

The election contest covered in another chapter grew out of the campaign of 1878.

231

OBSERVATION THIRTY-FIVE.

Pillsbury's Defeat for the Fourth Term and the Dawning of Gov. Hubbard.

The contest for the Republican nomination for governor in 1881 was an echo of the passing of the Ramsey dynasty in the politics of Minnesota. In speaking of Ramsey I do not refer to him personally, but only as a representative of a powerful faction in the

Library of Congress

Republican party which made him their leader, and around whose standard they loyally and successfully rallied for many years.

Ramsey, personally, was neither very active nor offensive during all these years, but he stood by his friends—an element in his character which was highly commendatory.

Hon. John S. Pillsbury of Minneapolis was, in 1881, serving his third term as governor. He had made a very acceptable official, and had given the state a good business administration. He had, withal, made many strong friends in St. Paul by his action at the time of the burning of the capitol in the spring of 1881. The plan was to delay the rebuilding of the capitol, thus giving an opportunity for some possible change in its location. The fact that Governor Pillsbury, a resident of Minneapolis, took issue with Fletcher, another resident of the same city, and by his influence largely aided in securing an immediate appropriation from the legislature for another building, had given him a strength in St. Paul which otherwise it would have been impossible for him to secure.

The movement in favor of Minneapolis at the time of the burning of the capitol in 1881 was largely led by Hon. Loren Fletcher, member of the legislature from Minneapolis. It in reality delayed Fletcher going to Congress some eight years, for later, when he was a candidate for Congress and Hennepin and Ramsey counties were in the same district, Ramsey county had a candidate and Hennepin sprang another candidate in the person of Hon. J. B. Gilfillan, which would not have been done if Ramsey county had not been so unalterably opposed to Mr. Fletcher. So that Mr. Fletcher's loyalty to his own city proved for him a disastrous political move, though subsequently he obtained the coveted prize and went to Congress for a term of years. It was rather ungrateful for Minneapolis to have elected Lind to Congress over Fletcher in 1902.

Mr. Pillsbury had been in the Ramsey coterie of politicians, and his administration to a greater or less degree retained in official position many of the henchmen of the dethroned leader. The Pioneer Press, always the champion of Ramsey, was at this time specially

Library of Congress

zealous in urging the party to give Pillsbury a fourth term, though third terms are not even yet popular. If there had been only that which the newspaper champion was seeking for Pillsbury the claim would have been well nigh irresistible, but when it came to asking a fourth term that was the vulnerable spot in the Pillsbury armour which was easily found and pierced by the shafts of the opposing forces.

Gen. L. F. Hubbard of Red Wing, was the candidate of the opposition to Pillsbury. In the eyes of the old Ramsey dynasty General Hubbard had committed two unpardonable sins which could neither be forgiven nor forgotten. In 1868, when the split in the Third Congressional district occurred, General Hubbard was given the nomination for Congress by the Ramsey wing of the party in opposition to Donnelly. After a brief period he threw consternation and almost defeat into the Ramsey ranks by withdrawing from the canvass. Again, in 1873, he was a member of the state senate in the memorable contest between Governor Davis and Senator Ramsey, which finally resulted in McMillan being selected as Ramsey's successor. General Hubbard was one of the leaders in the Davis movement, and the advocacy of Pillsbury on the part of the Pioneer Press was not animated so much by love for him as by hatred of Hubbard. Weeks before the state convention was held that 233 paper was pouring hot shot into the ranks of the Hubbard faction. It denounced him as the candidate of the prison ring, censured his friend H. B. Wilson of Red Wing, who was working for him, claiming that he (Wilson) was animated solely by a desire to be superintendent of public instruction.

Another element of objection to Hubbard was that Davis, and possibly Washburn, favored him. The party machinery was really in the hands of the Hubbard forces, and the state convention was not called until September 28th, an unusually late period. The Pioneer Press denounced this, and said it must have been done on the ground that the state was so strongly Republican that it was not necessary to make any canvass for the ticket—which was not far from the truth. Capt. H. A. Castle was chairman of the Ramsey county committee. He was an ardent supporter of Hubbard, and when the call for the Ramsey county convention was issued on a few days' notice, fixing the primaries on Saturday,

Library of Congress

September 11th and the convention for Monday, September 13th, the rage of the Ramsey organ knew no bounds.

On September 7th it had a double-leaded column editorial for Pillsbury, denouncing the Ramsey county Republicans for bringing out the call, claiming that it was done by the Davis men to influence the state for Hubbard, and calling on Pillsbury's friends to capture the convention.

On September 8th it contained this drive at Capt. Castle:

There is universal indignation among the Republicans of St. Paul at the action of the county committee, not only in precipitating the primaries three weeks, relatively, before the usual time, but more especially at the gross and palpable trick which Captain Castle has attempted to play on the Republicans of St. Paul, by calling the primaries by wards, instead of by precincts, according to the usual custom in such cases.

The morning before the primaries the Pioneer Press had a foaming editorial, declaring that "St. Paul owes a debt of gratitude to John S. Pillsbury." And in answer to the off-repeated charge that Pillsbury was not a candidate said:

234

If nominated by the unasked-for suffrages of the people of Minnesota he will not decline.

The Ramsey county convention was a mixed Pillsbury victory. The anti-Hubbardites had induced Hon. A. R. McGill of St. Peter to be a candidate, and between the McGill and Pillsbury forces they had carried the convention by a narrow margin.

When the Ramsey county convention was called to order there was an immediate test of strength. The Hubbard forces nominated C. K. Davis for chairman, and the anti-Hubbard men selected Capt. Russel Blakely as their leader. The votes stood Blakely 28, Davis 25.

Library of Congress

The delegates to the convention were divided between friends of Pillsbury and McGill, but Hubbard was not allowed to have a friend in the list. In view of changes which have since occurred the names of those sent to the state convention from Ramsey county are worthy of record. They were: R. Blakely, H. P. Upham, J. C. Haupt, Stanford Newell, J. P. Jacobson, George Watson, F. Driscoll, S. S. Taylor, C. M. Bell, R. C. Wiley, William Bickel and M. D. Flower.

The Hubbard forces were much demoralized, but sprung quite a disorganizing movement on the convention just before the adjournment. C. D. Gilfillan, who had from the early history of state politics, been hostile to the Ramsey wing of the party, offered a resolution instructing the delegates to support Pillsbury for governor in the state convention. He stated that he was not in favor of Pillsbury, and did not think the convention was, but he wanted the matter tested. Capt. Castle followed with a resolution instructing the delegates to support McGill in the state convention. Personally he was for Hubbard. These resolutions were firebrands. The Pillsbury and McGill men combined were in control of the convention, but neither faction was strong enough to instruct for its particular candidate. To vote both resolutions down would be bad, and to vote either one up was impossible. In this dilemma the not unusual course was adopted of having a row, and amid yells and speeches and catcalls the chairman recognized a motion to adjourn and declared it carried regardless of how the vote stood.

235

The Dispatch was in something of a transition state at this time, having been in charge of Governor Marshall and Gen. C. C. Andrews until a short time previous. Gen. S. P. Jennison of Red Wing was temporarily in editorial charge, and very warmly advocated Hubbard's cause. In that paper, on the evening of September 14th, General Jennison made this comment, evidently based upon the riotous adjournment of the county convention without instructions:

Library of Congress

It shows that the end of the impudent, corrupt, venal domination of the Pioneer Press ring of slick, smooth-tongued, canting hypocrites is approaching. It took all the power of the corporations and the help of the McGill victims to save a lean majority in the county where the fourth term is the strongest. The candidate of the Pioneer Press, if he goes into the convention at all, will thrive under its blasting support, ad did Alexander Ramsey in his candidacy for the senate.

This was the last shot fired from the Jennison locker. Three days later, September 17th, Capt. H. A. Castle published an announcement that, after 14 months' retirement, he had again resumed editorial charge of the paper. The succeeding numbers of the Dispatch verified the correctness of the statement, for every issue was a broadside of grape and cannister fired into the Ramsey-Pillsbury-P. P. crowd. Prior to Capt. Castle's taking charge of the paper the Pioneer Press had abused him very liberally, owing to his advocacy of Hubbard. This had been continued day after day without any sparing of adjectives. Necessarily, Capt. Castle was a little behind in the contest of expletives, but he caught up with the procession with notable promptness, and on the 22d of September had gained sufficient bravery to print a tribute to his esteemed contemporary, almost too personal for history.

Mr. Wheelock had previously expressed equally complimentary views of Capt. Castle. It was still six days before the state convention when this was printed. Apparently things were hot and still a-heating.

Up to a certain point the effort to place Hon. John S. Pillsbury in the governor's chair for the fourth time was tried under as favorable circumstances as could be expected to exist. He 236 had strong political friends in both of the leading cities of the state, was strong in the country and had given what was recognized as a good administration for the state.

But on Sept. 15, 1881, just two weeks before the Republican state convention was to be held, he sent the following letter to the Pioneer Press:

Library of Congress

The action which you have taken in placing my name before the people for further gubernatorial honors was, as you are aware, without my knowledge or consent. While I am gratified with the very high compliment paid me by the citizens of Ramsey county and other persons in the state, as well as by the friendly sentiments frequently expressed by yourself, I am constrained to adhere to my former determination to retire from political life at the close of this term of office, and this card is to inform you of my purpose.

Yours respectfully, J. S. PILLSBURY.

This letter was all the more significant of Governor Pillsbury's sincerity from the fact that Ramsey county had already been carried against Hubbard and practically for Pillsbury, although there were some McGill men on the delegation to the state convention.

He was, of course, assured of his own county of Hennepin if he was a candidate, and with these two prominent counties in his favor would have been a formidable competitor in the convention.

This letter was a sad blow to the faction that was hoping to defeat General Hubbard by the use of Pillsbury's name. The Pioneer Press braced up as well as could be expected under the circumstances and declared that the people were so uproarious for Pillsbury that he would not be permitted to retire. This attempted bold front was not a success, and the ordinary political tactics were resorted to, that is, the bringing out of favored sons from the various portions of the state. Everyone, of course, understands that this is done with no especial love for the candidates trotted out, but with a view of making up a field strong enough to prevent the leading candidate from winning. McGill was already in the field, and in the few days which intervened prior to the state convention, T. B. Clement of Faribault, Rice 237 county, Clark W. Thompson of Wells, Faribault county, and J. C. Stoever of Henderson, Sibley county, were presented to the public. It will be noticed that all of these candidates were so situated geographically as to conflict with Hubbard; but the scheme worked sufficiently to have them all come up to the convention with their own

Library of Congress

county delegates and some scattering votes besides. The Pioneer Press had a good word for each one of these candidates, while in the same breath it was insisting that Pillsbury was the only man who ought to receive the nomination.

The war between the Dispatch and the Pioneer Press was continual, lively and bitter every day, but in spite of this the 28th of September, the date of the state convention, arrived just as if no trouble existed. It was Hubbard against the field, and the confidence that was felt in his defeat was voiced by the following utterance in the Pioneer Press on the morning of the convention:

That Hubbard is badly beaten there is no doubt, if the sentiment of the convention should not be utterly perverted by the trading combinations by which his friends were endeavoring last night to recruit his strength.

It will be noticed that there was a little anchor thrown to windward for defeat in the statement quoted, and that was relied upon to explain how it happened when defeat finally came.

There were no contesting delegations, and consequently the temporary chairman was not a bone of contention. Gen. James H. Baker of Mankato was selected for the honor of chairman, and was easily chosen. General Baker was for Clark Thompson for governor, but he was also in favor of General Baker for railroad commissioner, and consequently was in a frame of mind to be very impartial in his decisions.

The first motion of any significance in the convention was to change the order laid down in the call and nominate the judges for the supreme bench prior to selecting the rest of the state ticket.

The object of this motion appears later in the story. By a vote of 180 to 113 it was laid upon the table, and that vote was 238 a test which demonstrated that General Hubbard was strong enough to down the field. There was not a great amount of time nor much

Library of Congress

oratory wasted in presenting the respective candidates for governor. C. Amundson of St. Peter presented McGill's name, and O. B. Gould of Winona seconded it. General Jennison of Red Wing nominated Hubbard, and Col. T. J. Sheehan of Albert Lea and J. A. Thatcher of Zumbrota, Goodhue county, seconded it. In spite of Pillsbury's letter already quoted, Captain Russell Blakely of St. Paul nominated him. J. B. Wakefield of Blue Earth City named Clark W. Thompson, and General Baker seconded the nomination. Gordon E. Cole of Rice county named T. B. Clement and Jacob Frankenfield of Henderson closed the oratory by asking the convention to select J. C. Stoever. Here was a field with a vengeance. In spite of this formidable array of talent it only took two ballots to settle the contest, and, in fact, but one formal ballot. Here is the official record:

Informal Ballot. Formal Ballot. Hubbard 140 160 Pillsbury 57 51 McGill 41 47 Thompson 30 20 Clement 29 18 Stoever 8 ... Scattering ... 16 Total 305 306 Necessary to choice 153 154

There were the usual huzzas by the victors and the gloomy faces of the defeated, but the world at large moved on as of yore.

There was a moderate contest for the attorney generalship between W. J. Hahn of Wabasha and Fayette Marsh of Still-water, though the ballot, which was 186 for Hahn to 106 for Marsh, did not indicate the closeness which was anticipated.

At that time the railroad commissioners were elected by the people. Ex-Governor Marshall had been one of the commissioners for two terms, and was a candidate for the third.

239

Gen. James H. Baker was a contestant for this emolument, and won by a scratch, receiving 155 votes, as against 144 for Marshall.

The redoubtable Sam Nichols had been clerk of the supreme court for two terms, and was a candidate for a third term. Sam came from Fergus Falls, Otter Tail county, but the necessity of his business requiring him to live in St. Paul, he was counted in his old home

Library of Congress

as a non-resident. As the most certain method of defeating him his enemies presented the name of J. C. Hill of Otter Tail county as chief competitor, making it something of a "home run." George P. Johnson of Madelia was a candidate on the side, hoping to slide in between the chief contestants. The informal ballot resulted:

Nichols 123, Hill 124, Johnson 28. When this was announced Sam for the first time in his political life turned pale. The first formal ballot resulted: Nichols 143, Hill 141. After this was announced it was discovered that two votes had been pasted together and the tellers had thrown them both out. These two votes, if counted, would make the candidates a tie, and so another ballot was ordered. Sam's experience in calling the roll as clerk in the legislature and other political bodies warned him that it was often easier to win in a convention by having the tellers in one's favor rather than relying on the whims of the delegates. Hence, while the third ballot was in progress, he was giving his attention to the tellers. Under his shrewd manipulation the third ballot was interrupted by the announcement that the tellers had discovered that one of the ballots pasted together was for Nichols and the other for Hill. That would make the votes stand 144 to 142. No inquiry was made to ascertain whether that double vote was cast by some one person who had promised both candidates, and Mr. Hill's friends were not shrewd enough to ask the question how two ballots could become pasted together when they had been dropped singly into a hat and not into a mucilage bottle. Consequently Sam's work with the tellers stood, and he not only got the office for the third time, but continued right along until he had held it for five successive terms. Thanks to the tellers, Sam beat the record in the length of time, that position has ever been held by anyone.

240

Charles A. Gilman of St. Cloud was lieutenant governor, Charles Kittleson of Albert Lea treasurer, and Fred Von Baumbach of Alexandria secretary of state, and all were renominated for their respective positions. W. W. Braden of Preston was the first new man placed upon the ticket aside from Hubbard, and he was nominated for state auditor. D. A. Dickinson of Mankato and William Mitchell of Winona were already associate justices

Library of Congress

of the supreme court, and they were nominated by Gilman. The third associate justice was Greenleaf Clark of St. Paul, who had been appointed the previous March, when the supreme court had been enlarged from three to five members. And here came a fight resulting in C. E. Vanderburgh of Minneapolis being nominated by 218 to 97 for Clark. That completed the ticket. The Democrats undertook to make a little diversion when their convention met October 6th by endorsing Mitchell, Dickinson and Clark. On October 13th Judge Clark printed a letter declining the honor on the ground that he had allowed his name to be used in the Republican convention and ought not to figure in both. The Democrats kept him on their ticket notwithstanding.

The disappointment, owing to the defeat of Pillsbury, was so great that it was necessary to wreak vengeance upon someone, and Judge Vanderburgh and Hennepin county were the victims. The Pioneer Press editorial on September 29th was headed, "A Judgeship Bought." This was the opening sentence:

No such shameful spectacle was ever witnessed in a Republican state convention in this state as that which was exhibited at the Atheneum in St. Paul yesterday, when a seat on the supreme court bench of Minnesota was openly put up for sale.

The editorial proceeded to denounce the Minneapolis delegation as "unprincipled trading politicians," claiming that they had voted for Hubbard in return for the nomination of Vanderburgh, and that was why the anti-Hubbard men endeavored to nominate the judges prior to the nominations for governor.

The following gentlemen composed the Minneapolis delegation in that convention: R. B. Langdon, C. H. Pettit, A. C. Haugan, J. B. Gilfillan, R. C. Benton, C. W. Johnson, F. Hooker, 241 George A. Camp, F. P. Lane, H. G. Hicks, W. E. Hale, J. Barge, A. Jugenson, D. A. Lydeau, H. L. Gordon, G. F. Johnson, J. C. Whitney, W. M. Burrows, W. Hayden, Lee Hahn, E. Nash. These names comprise some of the best known citizens and most

Library of Congress

prominent members of the Republican party in Minneapolis, but still they were the men who were being denounced by the Pioneer Press.

I was publishing the Globe at that time, and in the interests of harmony advised the Pillsbury men to bolt, in the following paragraph:

If the Pillsbury men have a particle of spunk they will bolt. They have been spit upon, kicked, had their eyes blackened, their noses punched, their ears wrung, and a knife plunged under their fifth rib and turned around in their intestines. Are they men to suffer such dishonor and not resent it? Dare they bolt, or will they consider the saliva which was yesterday planted between their eyes and is now streaming down their cheeks as a new patent face cosmetic designed for beautifying the complexion?

In spite of the advice I gave them they did not bolt. The Democrats, as a matter of form, nominated Gen. R. W. Johnson of St. Paul for governor. Brief as was the campaign, it was long enough to have the vote in November stand: Hubbard 65,025, Johnson 37,168, and another one of the frequent and memorable Republican fights in Minnesota passed into history. Let it be recorded. 16

242

OBSERVATION THIRTY-SIX.

W. D. Washburn's Defeat for the Senate by Gov. Knute Nelson.

"As ye sow so shall ye reap." I do not know that a sentiment of this kind has anything to do with politics, but it seems to me that when Senator Washburn relegated Senator Sabin to private life after one term, he laid the ground work for having Governor Nelson serve him in the same manner when the proper time came. When Washburn defeated Sabin in the winter of 1888 he established a one-term precedent which Governor Nelson and his friends were not slow to profit by. The consequence was that in the winter of 1895, when Washburn's term was about to expire, he received a hypodermic injection in the neck, of

Library of Congress

his own medicine, and it proved fatal. Senator Nelson was then governor, and in the fall election preceding the senatorial election was a candidate for re-election, succeeding, as a matter of course, as nothing but success has marked Senator Nelson's career from the initiative.

There were rumors all through the gubernatorial campaign that he would blossom out as a candidate for a senator in January, and he did. Washburn and his friends laid great stress upon the speech Governor Nelson made at Albert Lea on the same platform with Senator Washburn, in which he was reported as saying this:

It has been reported that I am a candidate for United States senator, but this is not so. I am not a candidate and do not expect to be. I am a candidate for governor and want to be elected governor, and if elected, expect to serve out my term as governor. But elect your Republican legislative ticket, so as to send my friend Washburn

Knute Nelson

243 back to the United States senate, or if you do not like him, send some other good Republican.

I do not say personally that Governor Nelson was correctly quoted, but the words which I have given above were alleged to have been uttered by him, and a committee of Washburn's friends signed a statement to that effect and printed it in the newspapers. I accordingly record it on that authority and not my own.

When he really became a candidate it was urged that his Albert Lea speech was entirely consistent with his candidacy for the senate, the argument being made that senators are not elected by the people, and consequently he was not in the direct sense a candidate for the senate at that time, and also the very county where he was making the speech subsequently elected representatives to the legislature in favor of Nelson, and, of course, in opposition to Washburn.

Library of Congress

Along about the time the legislature was meeting petitions sprang up from all over the state to Governor Nelson, asking him to be a candidate. A public meeting was held at Frazee City on Jan. 10, 1895, devoted to bringing Nelson out as a candidate for the senate. He would certainly have been less than human if he had refused the prize, which was seemingly offered him on a silver platter; and still it was almost up to the last moment before Washburn and his friends could really believe that they were to have Governor Nelson for a competitor. Senator Washburn was credited with having the Canadian Pacific Railroad at his back, which was really no particular advantage to him, for, as a matter of fact, there was no evidence near or remote that they expended a dollar to aid Mr. Washburn in his campaign. It is perhaps no discredit to Mr. Washburn to say that he possesses aristocratic tendencies, and consequently was not as popular personally as the bluff farmer, Governor Nelson. I do not consider it any discredit to a man to be aristocratic if he has the money and brains upon which to rest his cause, but if you are in politics it is not advisable to let anybody know it, and Washburn did not make any special concealment of this fact, though he was courteous and polite to his humblest constituent, 244 especially if that constituent was in any danger of getting into the legislature.

As the time approached for a caucus there was a great deal of discussion about having an open caucus with a viva voce vote, and practically this is what was done. The caucus was open to the reporters, and the roll was called for each man to give his choice publicly. The galleries were thrown open to the newspaper men from the country; and, as the State Editorial Association was just then convening in St. Paul, the country newspaper men filled the galleries to overflowing. The caucus met at 8 p. m. January 18th. There was no contest for chairman, John L. Gibbs of Albert Lea being selected to preside. Gilbert Gutterson of Blue Earth county was chosen secretary, and Chris Ellingson of Hennepin county assistant secretary. Governor Nelson had scored by having two of his countrymen in a position to count the votes, which, at times, determines the result. The roll call showed 141 present at the caucus out of a possible 142, and the first question which agitated the body was to determine whether 72, a majority of all the Republicans in the legislature, should nominate,

Library of Congress

or whether 71, a majority of all those present, should be allowed to nominate. It was finally decided that the successful man must have 72 votes. Senator Wyman of Minneapolis nominated Mr. Washburn, and Senator E. T. Young of Appleton, Swift county, nominated Mr. Nelson. Mr. Douglas of Moorhead nominated S. G. Comstock of that city, and Mr. Lockwood nominated Congressman McCleary. Those were all the entries in the race. Six ballots were taken that night, without nominating anybody, but they settled the question that Senator Washburn was defeated. The ballots were as follows:

1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.	6th.	Washburn	61	59	60	60	57	55	Nelson	45	55	57	58	58	60
Comstock	14	10	9	10	14	14	McCleary	11	11	10	11	9	8	Scattering	7	6	5	2	3

It is notable that Washburn polled his entire strength the first ballot; then he lost two, regained his loss, then lost three, and closed up the last ballot with six votes less than he began 245 with. Nelson, on the other hand, gained 10 on the second ballot, two more on the third, and still one more on the fourth, and closed on the sixth ballot with 15 more than he began with. The handwriting was on the wall large enough for a bill-board. The Nelson men were anxious to continue the caucus, but Washburn's friends were strong enough to secure an adjournment after the sixth ballot. They had something to think about. The caucus did not adjourn to any fixed time, and for the next two or three days almost the entire talk of the city was, will there be another caucus? The Nelson men were anxious for another caucus, but the Washburn men were not, and Nelson and his friends did not press the caucus matter, but went into the open legislature to finish the contest. When the first vote was taken in the legislature Nelson had 27 in the senate and 75 in the house—a total of 102, 98 of whom were Republicans. Four Democrats had also voted for Nelson, notably among them being Hon. P. H. Kelly of St. Paul. Washburn had 16 in the senate and 20 in the house, a total of 36; Comstock 3 in the senate and 6 in the house, a total of 9; McCleary had 2 in the house and none in the senate; Lind had 1 in the senate and none in the house; Donnelly had 5 in the senate and 8 in the house, a total of 13. Judge William Mitchell received 2 in the senate and 2 in the house, a total of 4. There was 1 absentee.

There was the usual joy and jubilation of the victors, though it was not as pronounced as it sometimes is, because the result was not reached in a caucus, and there is a trifle more restraint in the open legislature than there is in the caucus. Still, everybody seemed to be happy except the Minneapolis newspapers. They raved violently for a day or two; but as it is useless to tear your hair after the other fellow has taken your scalp, their agony was not long prolonged, and the state settled down to the view that Governor Nelson was thoroughly competent to take care of our public interests at Washington—a statement which his career there has more than verified, as he has now become one of the leading senators of the country.

246

OBSERVATION THIRTY-SEVEN

The Issue of Five Million Railroad Bonds and Their Final Payment.

Like all new commonwealths, Minnesota early realized that railroads were a positive necessity, and that no material development could be hoped for without them. When Minnesota was admitted the country was in a state of financial depression. The panic of 1857 and the general distress which followed had left everything prostrate. While there were about 150,000 people in Minnesota they were widely scattered, production was comparatively small, and there was little inducement for capitalists to build railroads where population was so small and traffic sure to be light for many years to come. Land grants had been bestowed upon the state by Congress for railroad purposes, and the state had in turn enacted laws granting them to private corporations. But this was not enough to induce capital to come to the rescue. The consequence was that on the 8th day of March, 1858, the legislature passed an amendment to the Constitution authorizing the issue of \$5,000,000 of bonds of the state, to be granted under restrictions specified, to railroad companies as rapidly as they constructed ten miles of road ready for the superstructure. This was submitted to the people at a special election on April 15, 1858, and was carried by a vote of 27,023 yes to 733 no. The unanimity of this vote shows the great desire of

Library of Congress

the people then in Minnesota to secure this improvement. But, as usual with such things, politics cropped up. The railroad companies went ahead and graded and prepared for the superstructure 250 miles. Governor Sibley was governor of the state, and he placed even more restrictions 247 about the issuance of the bonds than the law required, but finally did issue 2,275 bonds of the denomination of \$1,000 each. The railroads were to pay the interest on these bonds, but, as usual in such enterprises, they defaulted. The bonds were to run 25 years, and the interest, seven per cent, was to be paid semi-annually in New York. With the default of the companies in paying the interest a great furor arose and the outcry was made that the state had been swindled. The bonds had really been issued under Democratic auspices, but the Republican politicians saw an opportunity of making capital against the Democrats by a hue and cry against the bonds. The result was that in 1860 a Republican legislature enacted the following:

No law levying a tax or making other provision for the payment of interest or principal of the bonds denominated Minnesota State Railroad Bonds shall take effect or be in force until such law shall have been submitted to a vote of the people of the state and adopted by a majority of the electors of the state voting upon the same.

To make sure that the state would not pay the bonds, the legislature also proposed another amendment to the Constitution, which read as follows:

The credit of this state shall never be given or loaned in aid of any individual, association or corporation, nor shall there be any further issue of bonds denominated Minnesota State Railroad Bonds under what purports to be an amendment to section 10 of Article IX, of the Constitution, adopted April 15, 1858, which is hereby expunged from the Constitution, saving and excepting and reserving to the state, nevertheless, all rights, remedies and forfeiture accruing under said amendment.

This proposed amendment to the Constitution was adopted November 6, 1860, almost with as great unanimity as the original amendment authorizing the loan was adopted in

Library of Congress

1858. The default of the railroads in meeting the interest on these bonds was largely due to our own people. The political controversy led to violent agitation, public meetings were held denouncing the bonds, and the Republican newspapers were insistent that they would never be paid. The railroad corporations which had 248 received them naturally supposed when they took them that they would be a good collateral upon which to borrow money; and the general impression would be, laying politics aside, that when a great state gave its note it was pretty good collateral security. Marked copies of St. Paul and other papers berating the bonds and declaring they never would be paid were sent to financial men in New York, and tied the hands of the railroad contractors very tightly. So that it is not surprising that the default in payment of interest occurred. The railroad contractors had paid out all the money they could raise for labor, ties, right-of-way, etc., and were absolutely at a standstill. The result was that Minnesota had about 250 miles of graded road, without a single mile of rails laid. Then on top of this, when the expunging amendment was adopted, the railroad bonds were for a time absolutely worthless, so far as use in the business world was concerned. The constitutional amendment authorizing the bonds had of course been adopted irrespective of party lines, as shown by the small negative vote, but the great effort of the Republican party was to demonstrate that the Democratic party was responsible for the issue of the bonds, and that they—the Republican party—as a friend of the people would stand by the public and see that they were never paid; in other words, the politicians were ready to sanction and did sanction rank repudiation for the purpose of making political capital. In the early history of the state this controversy was one of the leading factors. Over and over again propositions were made for a compromise, but as promptly rejected. And still the matter of repudiation would not down.

An act was passed by the legislature March 6, 1871, providing for a commission to determine whether the bonds were a legal liability or not. This commission was also authorized to provide for a new issuance of 30-year bonds to take those already issued up if they were found to be a legal liability. This was submitted to a vote of the people

Library of Congress

at a special election in May, 1871, and of course voted down as usual. By this time the bondholders became convinced that the people of Minnesota would never, by their votes, declare in favor of paying the bonds. Still the stake of \$2,275,000 was too great not to be worked for.

249

The next movement was to both create a popular and a legal sentiment that the bonds could be paid without a vote of the people, in spite of the legislation and expunging amendment. Great attorneys, like W. M. Evarts of New York, were employed, who gave elaborate and carefully prepared opinions, setting forth that the expunging act of the State of Minnesota was in violation of the United States Constitution which forbids states from impairing contracts. There were public meetings, discussions in the newspapers, in the legislatures, in the pulpits, and all over the state on the subject, and the business public was thoroughly aroused to the desire of relieving the state from the stigma of repudiation. Still, the population had by this time largely increased and new men had come to the state, many of them from foreign lands, and the question of repudiation was not as near and dear to their hearts as the question of increasing their taxes. So the more time that elapsed the more hopeless became the situation.

Governor after governor in his annual message urged that something be done to adjust these bonds. Scarcely anyone had the temerity to propose to pay them in full, but the air was full of compromise talk, as that was about as far as it was worth while for anyone to attempt to go. Feeling in the matter ran high, and the political controversies which have been noted in this book were no more severe than was the controversy as to whether the state should care for its obligations. At this stage of the world it is possible that Minnesota would not deliberately vote to repudiate; but things were different in the earlier days. Everything was crude, and the people were crude as well.

Library of Congress

In 1877 a proposition setting aside the proceeds from the sale of the 500,000 acres of internal improvement lands granted the state by Congress to pay the bonds was submitted to the people, but on the 12th of June this was voted down, 59,176 no, to 17,324 yes.

The agitation was like Banquo's ghost, "it would not down."

The regular session of the legislature in 1881 passed an act proposing a tribunal to be made up of the governor, state auditor and attorney general, to investigate and ascertain what was absolutely due on the bonds, providing for settlement at 50 cents on 250 the dollar to those who were willing to accept that amount for principal and interest. This tribunal went to work, and Governor Pillsbury, who was an ardent advocate for the honor of the state, called a special session of the legislature, which met October 11, 1881, and adjourned November 13th. The first act passed at this special session was an act creating an internal improvement land fund, to be devoted to the payment of the Minnesota Railroad Adjustment Bonds, the question to be submitted to a vote of the people unless upon argument before the supreme court, the supreme court should decide it did not have to go before the people. This act was finally approved and acted upon, and provided for the payment of the 50 cents proposed in the act at the regular session of 1881. 500,000 acres of Internal Improvement lands granted to the state by Congress at an early period were religiously set aside to meet the indebtedness thus incurred. The question of using these lands for this purpose was submitted to the people in 1881 and received 82,438 yes to 24,526 no.

The road was thus made smooth for settling the whole matter. While the 500,000 acres of land were set apart to meet the bonds, it was found that the new indebtedness created by the state, principal and interest, amounted to \$4,301,000, though the original face of the bonds issued was \$2,275,000, but they drew seven per cent and had been issued over 20 years. The sum of \$4,301,000 was 50 per cent of the original issue of bonds with the interest added.

Library of Congress

It was arranged that new bonds should be issued to take up the old ones. They were to be dated July 1, 1881, payable after ten years, and not more than 30 years at the option of the state. They were to draw 4½ per cent interest. In 1891, ten years after the issue, the state exercised its option of taking them up, and made a new issue of bonds for that purpose, the governor, auditor and treasurer being the funding commission.

At this date \$1,974,000 of those bonds are still outstanding, and the state auditor estimates that the gradual redemption of them through the funding process of the Internal Improvement fund will be completed by 1910, leaving the state without a dollar of bonded indebtedness. That is all the bonded indebtedness the state now has, and it is prohibited by the Constitution from creating any more.

All through the legislation on this subject the state was specially guarded in declining to admit that it had repudiated any obligation. The act under which the settlement was made was entitled, "An act for the adjustment of certain alleged claims," and the term "controverted claims" was used in the act itself. All through the law it was stated that the state disputed the validity of the indebtedness and did not then admit it. I suppose as they were willing to pay 50 cents on the dollar, they did not like to place themselves under suspicion of compromising something that they owed at par.

The bondholders were very willing to accept this settlement, and as their original bonds drew what now seems an enormous rate of interest—seven per cent—it is probably fair to say that they received all they were entitled to, as the state really paid almost double the amount of the original issue of its bonds.

At all events, the stain of repudiation was wiped from the escutcheon of the state, and ever since then the business public has breathed easier. It certainly was a stigma upon Minnesota for nearly a quarter of a century, and the men who were manly enough to stand up and continue the agitation year after year in the face of what seemed a hopeless contest are entitled to the utmost credit.

OBSERVATION THIRTY-EIGHT.

The Great State Treasury Defalcation in 1872–3.

An interesting event in Minnesota politics, and one which would have dethroned any political party which was not so thoroughly entrenched in the confidence of the people as the Republican party was in those days, was the great state treasury defalcation, which was developed in the winter of 1873.

Emil Munch had held the office of state treasurer for two terms, and was succeeded by his father-in-law, William Seeger. During Mr. Munch's term, as subsequent events and investigations disclosed, he had engaged largely in the purchase of timberlands and saw-mill operations, and doubtless had the usual expectation that his profits would enable him to restore any enforced loan he made from the treasury. As usual, there is generally a limit to such affairs, and this was no exception to the rule.

In January, 1873, someone came to me with the intimation that it would be well to have the state treasury overhauled. I do not now recall who the party was, but he was in a position to have his suggestion receive attention. Consequently, on the 31st of January, 1873, I wrote and published conspicuously in the Dispatch the following editorial, headed,

“WHERE IS THE MONEY?” Governor Austin's message gives this very satisfactory statement of the condition of the state treasury on the 1st of last September:

“The balance in the treasury on the 30th of November, 1871, was \$196,180.37; the receipts during the last fiscal year were \$783,481.28, making the total amount of available funds in the treasury during the year \$919,661.65. The disbursements within the same time were \$736,-361.59, leaving a balance in the treasury at the close of the fiscal year of \$243,300.”

Library of Congress

The people, not expecting so large a surplus as \$243,300 in the treasury, voted last fall to issue a quarter of a million bonds to enlarge our public institutions. There is now great haste manifested to secure this \$250,000 and place it in the treasury with the \$243,000 that the governor reports. Of course in the construction of buildings, the money will only be paid out as the work progresses, and the balance of the quarter of a million building fund must remain for a long time in the treasury. It would be a good idea for the legislature to investigate and ascertain whether the balance reported by the governor is in the vault at the capitol, or whether it is loaned to banks and individuals, and if loaned ascertain the rate of interest the state is receiving on it; or if, as astonishing as is the supposition, the state is not receiving the interest it might be well to inquire who is. There are some laws on the statute books that would aid a committee in prosecuting this inquiry; and as the legislature is the guardian of the people it would not be out of place to look into the way in which this business is being done. The salary of the state treasurer is but one thousand dollars per year, but for some unaccountable reason it is regarded as the best office in the state. Is it possible that this interest question has anything to do with the matter?

On the face of it this was a very innocent editorial, and seems to have been eminently fair; but the consternation it created probably never will be known, as most of the individuals who were especially hit by the article have long since passed from earth. Nevertheless, temperate as the article was, it bore very extensive fruit. It appeared on Friday afternoon, and Saturday morning Senator W. G. Ward of Waseca county offered the following resolution in the senate:

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to investigate and ascertain whether the surplus funds reported in the governor's message are in the vaults of the state treasury at the capitol, or loaned to banks and individuals, and if so loaned, at what rate of interest, and whether said interest is paid into the state treasury, and if not into the state treasury to whom paid, and what disposition has been made of the funds during the last fiscal year, and report the result of such investigation to the senate at an early day.

Library of Congress

Of course no one could object to such a resolution, and the common notice of debate was not even given, but it was immediately passed, and Senators Ward, R. B. Langdon of Minneapolis, and L. F. Hubbard of Red Wing were duly appointed as the investigating committee.

254

When the investigation began, Mr. Seeger was inclined to be very obstreperous, and declined to give much information; but as it proceeded it began to develop that the money was not in the vault of the state treasury to the extent of about \$180,000.

It was nearly a month after the investigation began when the house passed a resolution asking Seeger to resign, and on the 4th of March Mr. Charles Clarke of Minneapolis offered the following preamble and resolution in the house:

Whereas, On Thursday last, the 27th ult., the House did, by an emphatic majority, pass resolutions censuring and condemning the conduct and management of the state treasury; and,

Whereas, The House has delayed further information in the premises in order that the treasurer of the state might recognize in the sentiment of said resolution an imperative demand upon him for the tender of his resignation of public trusts, and that in the opinion of the House a sufficient and reasonable time has expired without any communication having been received of any intention on his part so to do, be it therefore

Resolved, That William Seeger, the present state treasurer, be and he hereby is requested to answer the imperative demands of the people in an immediate tender to the governor of the state of his resignation of the trusts placed in his hands.

Resolved, That the chief clerk of the House serve a copy of the foregoing resolution upon said William Seeger forthwith.

Library of Congress

After some debate the resolutions were adopted.

The next day this brought the following response from Mr. Seeger:

I am in receipt of the resolution passed by your honorable body on March 4th, 1873. I must decline to comply with the demand embodied in the resolution. I most respectfully decline to stigmatize my administration of the treasury by resigning my office under the circumstances which have transpired. It is not pretended that I have ever perverted one cent of the moneys of the state to my own use. Every dollar which has ever come into my hands has been faithfully accounted for. I found when I came into office the state treasury depleted by a large deficit, and that deficit has been made good during the first year of my term. My successor will receive it all. If this were simply a question of giving up the office, I would not hesitate one moment; but my reputation as a public man has been impugned and I have had no opportunity to be heard.

255

I am conscious of no wrong done by me. What I have done may be made the subject of judicial inquiry, and I am ready to meet that inquiry and its consequences before any tribunal.

(Signed) WILLIAM SEEGER.

Seeger's attorneys were Hon. C. K. Davis, Greenleaf Clark, John M. Gilman of St. Paul, and Gordon E. Cole of Faribault. This letter was, of course, prepared by his attorneys, and was really a very manly statement of the situation. It was eminently true, and created a great deal of sympathy for Mr. Seeger. It never was proven that he personally profited a dollar by the defalcation, in fact it was conceded he did not. He was simply used as a cover for a relative, and the bondsmen had, as he said, made up the deficit, so that in the outcome the state did not lose a dollar, and at the time he wrote this letter the money

Library of Congress

which was not in the treasury vaults when my article was printed and the investigation began, was actually there, but it was raised and placed there by the bondsmen.

The leading and most responsible bondsmen were Horace Thompson, president of the First National Bank of St. Paul, Charles Scheffer of St. Paul, but president of the First National Bank of Stillwater, and Maurice Auerbach, of the wholesale dry goods firm of Auerbach, Finch & Scheffer. As a matter of fact Munch and Seeger had been fair enough to advise their bondsmen of the deficit prior to the publication of my article in the Dispatch, and they, the bondsmen, had aided in placing the necessary money in the treasury at critical periods when legislative committees were counting the funds, hoping in this manner to postpone the evil day, and also inspired by the hope that Munch would recuperate his shattered business fortunes and restore the missing funds. When the investigation was ordered showing that the exposure must come, they met their responsibilities like brave and honorable men. They all proved themselves the souls of honor, and the state recovered every dollar, principal and interest, without having to bring suit, which is almost unparalleled in defalcations of such magnitude.

Mr. Thompson called the bondsmen together and told them they must raise every dollar that was due the state. Of course some were better able to pay their proportion than others, but it 256 was undoubtedly a great burden on every one. Mr. Thompson never faltered, and not only paid his share, but aided others less able in raising the necessary funds to recoup the state.

Emil Munch, who had originated the deficit, and his brother Adolph Munch were also on Seeger's bonds, but were unable to do much towards making good and the brunt of the burden fell upon the three men first named. Mr. Munch turned all his property over to the bondsmen but considerable of it was in litigation which the bondsmen assumed with heavy legal expenses so that but little was realized. Mr. Auerbach, the only one of the unfortunate bondsmen now living, tells me that before they were through it cost him personally nearly \$100,000. Large sums were paid the state for interest, which increased

Library of Congress

the original deficit very materially. Mr. Seeger told the legislative committee that when he took the treasury he accepted Emil Munch's note for \$112,000 as cash and the remainder was carried in a private memorandum book and on loose slips which really made it very difficult to trace.

Mr. Seeger's letter was laid on the table and a resolution ordering his impeachment was immediately passed. The impeachment proceedings were duly conducted by the senate, according to law. While they were in progress Mr. Seeger concluded it was best to resign, and accordingly sent his resignation to Governor Austin. Governor Austin accepted the resignation, though he was considerably criticised at the time for doing so. No one, however, felt any desire to persecute or prosecute Mr. Seeger, though the legislature refused to entertain the acceptance of the resignation and went ahead with the impeachment proceedings, convicting him and removing him from office.

E. W. Dike of Faribault was appointed treasurer for the remainder of Seeger's term, and the result of the exposure was that the salary of the treasurer was immediately raised to \$4,000.

No attempt was made to criminally prosecute anyone in the matter.

It was remarkable that the Democrats made but little fuss about all this, they had become so calloused by repeated defeats that they did not seem to think it worth while.

In the 50's Ohio had a somewhat similar experience. John 257 G. Breslin (Democrat) was a defaulting state treasurer, but secured the election of his brother-in-law, W. H. Gibson, Republican, as his successor. The exposure came while Gibson was in office. Breslin fled to Canada, and one of the hottest campaigns Ohio ever saw was waged between the Democrats and Republicans as to which political party was responsible. Gibson was finally exonerated, entered the army, serving with distinction during the war, and was elected to Congress as a reward for his military services.

In Minnesota the Republicans were the whole thing, there being no Democrats allowed to have a chance by holding an office. So the whole onus was upon the Republican party. The bondsmen were also all Republicans and their manly and honorable course prevented the defalcation making scarcely a political ripple. Instead of suffering the Republicans went right ahead with their political prosperity, but Republican legislatures hedged the state treasury about with such legislation that such an event could not happen again. But little absolute cash is now carried over night in the vaults of the state treasury. 17

258

OBSERVATION THIRTY-NINE.

Senator McMillan's Re-Election in 1881.

While it can be said that Senator McMillan did not have serious opposition to his re-election in 1881 it should not be supposed then he was entirely unopposed.

It will be remembered that his first election, in 1875, was as a successor to Alexander Ramsey, and that he was chosen as a compromise candidate—a veritable dark horse. His luck was due to the split in the Republican party, and can be charged up to the account of a political intrigue. Senator McMillan himself never was a politician. He had been for many years, and still was when elected senator, on the bench, and this gave him an excuse for keeping aloof from politics, an excuse which I am sure was desired, for it is to ex-Senator McMillan's credit that he was never enamored of professional politics.

During the canvass for the election of the legislature no candidate was talked of in opposition to Senator McMillan, and, while his candidacy was not formally an issue in the campaign, it was the general impression that, according to the usual custom, he would be given a second term without a contest. There was, therefore, a good deal of surprise when on the 22d of December, 1880, some six or seven weeks after the election of the legislature, the Pioneer Press came out with a double leaded editorial, placing

Library of Congress

ex-Senator Ramsey in the field. Ramsey was then secretary of war in Hayes' cabinet, having been appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of McCrary of Iowa, who had been elected to the senate from that state. Garfield was president-elect, and, of course, Ramsey's term in the cabinet would expire with the termination of the Hayes administration, 259 on the 4th of March, 1881. That would also be the date for the beginning of the term of the senator to be elected in January, 1881, by the Minnesota legislature. To say that this announcement created consternation in the McMillan ranks, is to state the situation mildly. It was a regular thunder clap. The McMillan men could not believe that Ramsey was a party to the scheme, as they had regarded his cabinet position only a temporary resurrection and thought, at his age, he would not again be in the field for an office where a contest was necessary. A delegation of McMillan's friends posted off to Washington, confident that they would secure Ramsey's refusal to be a candidate, but they found he was made of sterner stuff. While he did not blame McMillan personally, he felt that he (McMillan) had profited by his (Ramsey's) defeat in 1875, and the temporary residence in Washington as a member of the cabinet made him desirous for the old position in the senate, which he had already held for twelve years, but which would be nicely rounded out if the figure was raised to eighteen. There was trouble in the air and dejection in that committee's ranks when they returned to St. Paul with several fleas in their ears.

It is due the Pioneer Press to say that it made a splendidly aggressive campaign in behalf of Ramsey, albeit it was bitterly personal. For downright bluff and continuous proclamation of certain success, it has rarely been equaled. While its heavy work was for Ramsey, it incidentally boomed C. K. Davis and Gen. John B. Sanborn. They were neither of them actual candidates, any more than when a man is prominently mentioned for such a position as United States senator, it usually inspires a hope that the mention may grow into a reality. Of course, the Pioneer Press motive was to disintegrate McMillan's strength by setting the senatorial bee buzzing in the bonnet of Davis and Sanborn, on the theory that some members of the legislature might vote for them who could not, at least at the

Library of Congress

outset, be induced to go for Ramsey, and otherwise would support McMillan. In reality, I do not think Senator McMillan could blame the Pioneer Press, for when he was elected to the senate, the editor of that paper (Mr. Wheelock) was just beginning his second term as postmaster of St. Paul, but the senator, almost as 260 his first official act, recommended the late Dr. David Day, who was his brother-in-law, for that position, and he was duly appointed. Dr. Day was one of the targets at which the Pioneer Press constantly shot, the favorite epithet being, "Brother-in-law Postmaster Day." While as politics go, this made the Pioneer Press' opposition to McMillan natural, it at the same time weakened its cause, and probably was the greatest factor in making the fight unsuccessful, as the state at large, which had not suffered, took no interest in inflicting revenge.

The legislature stood 118 straight Republicans to 26 Democrats, with three greenbackers, who were also Republicans. The contest was consequently a purely family fight, without enough Democratic opposition to be of the slightest interest. The McMillan men evidently feared holding an early caucus, and, of course, the Ramsey men were glad of delay. Where a candidate feels confident of success, he rushes the caucus within a day or two after the legislature meets, but in this case it was postponed until Jan. 13, 1881, which was only five days prior to the date fixed by the Congressional act for the election. Every day from the 22d of December to the morning of the caucus, the Pioneer Press contained a fusillade on the subject, nearly always concluding with the assertion that McMillan's chances were hopeless. Some of the other Republican papers argued that McMillan was entitled to the usual precedent of the second term, to which the P. P. replied that as his election was an accident, and the result of a dead-lock, he had no further claim to the consideration of the party. The caucus met on the evening of the 13th with 114 present, making 58 necessary to a choice. Contrary to usual custom, no nominating speeches were made, and as soon as the caucus was organized, an informal ballot was ordered, which resulted: McMillan 64, Ramsey 26, Davis 16, Sanborn 7, Mons Grinager 1. The formal ballot stood: McMillan 78, Ramsey 26, Davis 10. Dr. Day had won his spurs, though he was far from being alone in the canvas for McMillan. The religious element

Library of Congress

of the Republican party was a strong adjunct to the doctor's campaign, but the following announcement in the P. P. the next morning after the caucus, I think, referred to the doctor's branch of the subject:

261

"At the Merchants Hotel the victors celebrated their victory by a convivial gathering over a dozen quarts of champagne, and the boys had a good time in number 18."

Editorially, the Pioneer Press the morning after the caucus, reviewed the situation, I presume very truthfully. While that review is of no consequence at this date, so far as the result is concerned, it is really of historical value, as, showing how members of the legislature double up on their promises, and can be used as a pointer for those who may engage in the future in similar contests. Here is the salient portion of the editorial:

"At one time and another during the progress of the canvass between 50 and 60 of the Republican senators and representatives had positively and cordially agreed to support Ramsey for senator. Of these there remained, up to the time of the caucus, 46 Republican senators and representatives who had agreed over and over again to vote for Ramsey on the first and subsequent ballots, and had given no notice to his friends of any change of intention, and a large number in addition who had agreed to support him after the first, second or third ballot. If the accuracy of this statement is challenged by any responsible McMillan man, the names of these 46 men, whose personal assurances were given that they would vote for Ramsey, will be published in the Pioneer Press. When the first informal ballot was taken but 23 of these men voted for Ramsey—just half the number who had assured his friends that he was their first choice, and that they would vote and work for his election, and who failed to give notice of any change in their intentions. If these 46 men had voted for Ramsey, as they had promised to do, McMillan's vote on the first ballot would have been reduced to 44."

Library of Congress

On the 18th of January, when the senate and house voted separately, the vote stood in the senate, McMillan 29, Daniel Buck of Mankato (Dem.) 5, Davis 1, Judge M. J. Severance 1. Senator William Campbell, a Democrat, was the one who voted for Davis, while Daniel Buck, who was in the senate, voted for Severance. In the house the vote stood McMillan 92, H. H. Sibley (Dem.) 4, C. H. Roberts 2. Senators Beeman, Langdon and Mealey, Republicans, and Simmons, Democrat, were absent. The joint session the next day was merely a ratification meeting 262 by the reading of the journals of the respective houses. After Ramsey had been originally brought out as a candidate, the secretary of the navy died, and President Hayes had (though he was secretary of war) appointed him to that position for ten days, which he was at liberty to do under the law without sending his name to the senate. When the first ten days had expired he reappointed him for another ten days, and so on. But while our distinguished fellow citizen was holding two cabinet positions, there were only 26 members of the legislature to do him reverence.

As I have already alluded to the religious element participating in that campaign, it seems only fair to quote from the Pioneer Press of Sunday, January 16th, the following tribute to that innovation in politics:

No one who knows Loren Fletcher and D. M. Sabin and C. D. Gilfillan and Wilder and Merriam and N. P. Clarke can doubt for a moment that they were working throughout the canvass with an eye single to the promotion of the cause of Christianity. The zeal displayed by these gentlemen in spreading the gospel of Christ and extending the walls of Zion cannot be too highly commended.

Perhaps I should add, as a counter religious irritant, that Col. William S. King of Minneapolis was one of Ramsey's stalwart supporters. "Wilder and Merriam," referred to in the above, were the late A. H. Wilder and John L. Merriam, uncle and father, respectively, of ex-Governor Merriam. They had always previously been Ramsey's most devoted supporters, and to my personal knowledge his (Ramsey's) second election to the senate

Library of Congress

was absolutely secured by aid which they were able to render at an opportune but desperate moment in the contest of 1869. Evidently in 1881 things were not as they used to be.

J. B. Gilfillan

263

OBSERVATION FORTY.

The Nomination and Election of Hon. J. B. Gilfillan to Congress.

One of the notable and perhaps the most peculiar contests for congressional honor which ever occurred in the state took place in the Fourth Congressional district in the spring of 1884. Hon. W. D. Washburn was elected from the Third district in 1878; and, after representing that district two terms, a new apportionment cut down the Third district, and out of a portion of it made the Fourth district. This district consisted of the counties of Anoka, Chisago, Hennepin, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Ramsey, Sherburne, Washington and Wright. Mr. Washburn continued in office from the Fourth district for one term, but he had in reality served three terms in Congress; and, while at the outset he would not have been averse to continuing in the same position to represent the Fourth district exclusively, as there were other aspirants, he concluded not to be a candidate for a fourth term. Hennepin county, however, claimed the congressman by right of inheritance, and Loren Fletcher considered that he was the natural successor of Washburn, as he had previously subordinated his ambition in order to give his warm personal and political friend Washburn the first chance. He entered the lists early, and at first had W. R. Merriam of St. Paul (afterward elected governor) as a competitor. A month before the nominating convention Merriam decided not to run, and Albert Scheffer of St. Paul then entered the race. It was in reality the old, old story of a contest between St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Scheffer had formerly lived in Washington county, and was really selected for his supposed strength in that locality. It was 264 thought with Washington and Ramsey

Library of Congress

counties in his favor he could carry enough of the smaller counties to win. The chief battle ground of the entire contest was, therefore, in Washington county. There were 13 towns in the county, and 11 of these Scheffer carried without contest, and claimed to have carried the other two, though the Fletcherites disputed it.

As showing how small matters often produce large results, the contest in Lakeland, one of the towns in Washington county, can be cited. Mr. B. K. Watson was chairman of the Republican town committee. His sympathies were rather with Scheffer than Fletcher; but Scheffer, having drifted away from the Republican party in the Greeley campaign of 1872, Watson did not really feel as if he could allow his sympathies to prevail. Elias McKean of Lakeland was a violently ardent Scheffer man. He came to Mr. Watson one morning and asked him to call a caucus the afternoon of that same day. Of course, it is customary in sharp political work to steal a march on the enemy; but in a spirit of fairness Watson declined, but promised to call in the next day, giving 24 hours' notice instead of no notice at all. Fayette Marsh of Stillwater was sent over to Lakeland by D. M. Sabin to superintend the caucus for Fletcher. He came to Mr. Watson, and, while Watson did not profess to be for Fletcher, he explained how he felt towards Scheffer on account of the Greeley wave, so that Marsh thought it safer to rely upon him than McKean. He, accordingly, went down to the mill at Lakeland and marshaled 62 men, telling them to go up to the caucus and follow Watson's lead. The men went up as directed, and promptly at the hour named in the call, McKean insisted on Watson calling the caucus to order. As soon as it was called to order someone nominated McKean as a delegate to the county convention. The 62 men Marsh had sent up, thinking they were obeying orders, as they saw Watson presiding, all voted for McKean, and the most rabid Scheffer man in the whole county was elected in a twinkling. In the meantime Marsh was down at the lumber yard getting some more men together to come up and follow Watson's lead. Before he returned, in addition to McKean, Henry Vollmer, another Scheffer man, was duly elected by the original 62. So that Marsh had succeeded in securing a 265 full delegation of Scheffer men from Lakeland to the county convention.

Library of Congress

Small as this circumstance was, it had a vital bearing upon the general result. Scheffer had 23 votes from the country towns to the county convention, while Stillwater was entitled to five delegates from the First ward, ten from the Second ward and nine from the Third ward, a total of 24. If the two votes from Lakeland could have been added to the Fletcher column it would have made Scheffer's cause almost hopeless. The caucuses in Stillwater were held in the evening. The Seymour-Sabin car shops were then in full blast, and employed a sufficient number of men to carry the city in any direction desired. Senator D. M. Sabin issued orders for all the car-shop men to vote the Fletcher delegate ticket. To make sure that they did so, ballots printed on blood-red paper were secured for the Fletcher delegates. Fayette Marsh, who was the generalissimo on the Fletcher side, took the precaution of having ballots printed on green paper as well, lest the Scheffer forces might get out red tickets also. The Scheffer men did not find out about the colored tickets in time, and voted ballots printed on plain white paper, but tried to bring the red ballots into disrepute by styling them the "blood vote." It early became evident to the Scheffer men that the Fletcher forces could carry the First and Second wards. They accordingly resorted to the usual political trick of laying the groundwork for a contest, and devoted all their energies to the Third ward, with the result that Fletcher had 15 uncontested votes from Stillwater and nine contested votes. He also had one vote from Stillwater town uncontested and one vote from Baytown, a suburb of Stillwater. This gave him 17 uncontested votes in the county convention to Scheffer's 23, and whoever got the nine votes from the Third ward of Stillwater controlled the convention. When this situation dawned both sides deliberately determined to make a double-headed county convention. There was no concealment about the plan whatever. The county convention was called to meet at 2 p. m. in the court house, on Saturday, May 24th. I spent the forenoon in Stillwater prior to the convention, and the current talk was that there was to be a fight physically, and one convention was to be 266 thrown out of the windows literally, while the other went ahead and did business.

Library of Congress

E. S. Hospes, who was a Scheffer man, was chairman of the county committee, and the duty would have devolved upon him of calling the convention to order. He was out of town, however, and gave his proxy to George F. Sabin, an equally ardent Scheffer man. I went up to the court house about half past 1 in order to get a safe and advantageous position where I could witness the fight, which had been so vociferously promised. As the town was full of lumber jacks who had been carousing more or less, I anticipated a very enjoyable afternoon. The great point at issue was regularity, and, of course, the convention which got started first would have the semblance of regularity. Sabin was rather inexperienced in politics and very nervous. He really wanted to be fair if it did not interfere with Scheffer's chances, and unfair if it did. About a quarter of 2 both sides filed in in force into the little court room. Sabin was particularly nervous and constantly consulting his watch. He finally proposed to Marsh that as he (Sabin) was acting chairman of the county committee they should compare watches, so that the convention might be called to order at exactly 2 o'clock. Marsh was a shrewder politician than Sabin, and treated the proposition contemptuously, but at the same time gave a preconcerted signal which instantly called Stephen Danforth, a member of the county committee, to the platform. Danforth began to read the call, while Sabin was still looking at his watch. In about three seconds it dawned on Sabin that he was getting left, and he, too, jumped on the platform, but wasted valuable time by stopping to read his proxy from Hospes, and then began to read the call. Danforth was accordingly a few laps ahead, as he had finished reading the call. He promptly nominated J. H. Townsend, a Fletcher man, for chairman, and as promptly declared him elected. Sabin had located himself in the judge's desk. By this time Townsend immediately came to the platform and stood up beside him to rally the Fletcher convention, while Sabin had charge of the Scheffer convention. At this stage of the proceedings Abe Hall, deputy warden in the state prison, who was a 267 powerful and something of a fighting man, ran up to Sabin and, throwing his arms about him, pinning Sabin's arms to his side, carried him out on the platform in front of the clerk's desk; so that the first blood for regularity was with the Fletcherites, as their chairman was ensconced upon the bench. By this time Sabin had collected his wits and proceeded to read the call,

Library of Congress

and went through the form of selecting A. F. Noyes of Forest Lake for chairman of the Scheffer convention. Everything had been cut and dried as a matter of course. Noyes instantly appointed a committee on credentials, with George F. Sabin as chairman. Sabin, just as promptly, pulled out of his pockets a report of the committee on credentials, giving the names of the 23 Scheffer delegates from the country, and the nine Scheffer delegates from the Third ward in Stillwater, thus giving Scheffer an overwhelming majority in the convention.

Sabin had no sooner read the last name on his list of credentials than Sam Judd of Marine had his mouth open to report a list of delegates to the district convention to be held at Minneapolis on the 28th. This is what would be termed rapid firing in war, and is probably as permissible in political war as in actual war. As quick as Sam Judd had read the names of seven men to go to Minneapolis the chairman of the Scheffer convention declared them elected, and a second later a motion to adjourn was put and carried, and the Scheffer men walked out of the court house.

In spite of Sabin's frequent consultations of his watch, it was exactly 2 p. m. when he read his credentials report, and four minutes after 2 p. m. when the Scheffer convention adjourned.

Having gotten rid of their surplusage, the Fletcher convention was more deliberate. Marsh sent out and got a stenographer and talked two columns of solid nonpareil, besides another solid column of resolutions, all of which were devoted to the question of regularity and denouncing Scheffer and his adherents.

The Fletcher convention only consisted of delegates from the three wards of Stillwater and one from Stillwater Town and one from Baytown; 11 towns from the country were absolutely unrepresented; but seven delegates were sent to the district convention at Minneapolis just the same.

Library of Congress

And now the war was transferred from Stillwater to Minneapolis. The district convention met in Market Hall, Minneapolis, at 12 noon May 28th. It was presumably composed of the following delegates: Anoka 3, Kanabec 1, Ramsey 15, Chisago 4, Pine 1, Wright 7, Isanti 2, Sherburne 1, Hennepin 17, uncontested, and Washington county 7, contested. C. H. Pettit, chairman of the district committee, called the convention to order at ten minutes past 12, and the contest for temporary chairman was immediately inaugurated. J. H. Thompson nominated George A. Camp of Minneapolis, while Governor Marshall nominated L. K. Stannard of Chisago as the Scheffer chairman. Anoka, Chisago, Kanabec, Pine, Ramsey and Sherburne counties voted solidly for Stannard, giving him 25, while Wright, Hennepin and Isanti voted solidly for Camp, giving him 26. George A. Camp was a great man in politics. I have seen him in many political contests, and I never saw one who put up as fine a bluff for being fair, without the slightest intention of carrying it out, as he could. He would really convince both sides that their destiny was absolutely safe in his hands, and it was—for the side he was on. In taking the chair on this occasion, Mr. Camp said:

Gentlemen of the Convention: I thank you for this honor and mark of confidence reposed in me by selecting me as your temporary chairman. In all fairness and justice to every member I shall not in any way abuse the confidence imposed in me. So far as my actions shall go in furthering the temporary organization. I shall endeavor to give every member an equal and just opportunity to present his claims.

Colonel Benton immediately moved that a committee of one be appointed from each senatorial district on credentials. Governor Marshall moved to appoint one from each county. Marshall's motion was lost by 24 for it and 27 against it, and Benton's motion then prevailed. Both the Fletcher and the Scheffer men had held caucuses the night previous and arranged everything in advance as well as they could; but it is not always that quite as bald a performance is given as on this occasion. Colonel Benton walked to the platform, and, taking from his pocket a paper, handed the chairman a list of the committee on 269

Library of Congress

credentials selected by the Fletcher caucus, and the chairman who was publicly pledged to be eminently fair—to his side, promptly announced that as the credentials committee.

Of course, if this credentials committee could have stood and their report have been adopted, Mr. Fletcher would have been the nominee beyond peradventure. Col. H. G. Hicks then moved that the committee on credentials be instructed to report the Washington county contest to the convention without recommendation. The chair very properly said that such a motion was out of order, as it practically rendered a committee on credentials unnecessary. The chair, however, actually did have a spasm of fairness, and said he would entertain the motion in the interests of harmony, provided it was unanimous. And here the Fletcher men seemed to have fallen asleep, for no one objected, and Colonel Hicks' motion was unanimously carried. If that motion had been lost Mr. Fletcher would undoubtedly have been the nominee for Congress. The credentials committee in reality had nothing to do, and in a short time submitted their report, naming the delegates from all of the counties except Washington. When they came to Washington, the committee reported that Fayette Marsh had submitted one side of the case, and George F. Sabin the other, and without stating what either side was they left it to the convention to decide.

At this stage of the proceedings Mr. Wyncoop of Chisago county wanted to withdraw both Fletcher and Scheffer. In response Governor Marshall offered to withdraw Scheffer's name if Hennepin county would withdraw Fletcher. This brought no response from Hennepin county, and Colonel Benton moved to proceed with the regular order of business. A motion was made to give Marsh and Sabin 30 minutes each to present their case to the convention. H. F. Barker of Isanti county moved to lay that motion on the table. Messrs. H. G. Hicks and H. A. Castle, both Scheffer men, favored omitting Washington county altogether. Barker's motion to lay on the table carried by 26 to 25.

The next motion was for a recess, but that was voted down by 26 to 25. Then it began to dawn on Barker that he had some power, and in fact as the sequel proved that he was the whole convention.

By some peculiar process, in spite of the tabling of the motion to allow the Washington county case to be presented, the case was taken up without reconsidering that vote. A long debate followed. Marsh, Sabin and half a dozen others participated in discussing the merits of the Washington county case. Pettit made a motion to admit the Fletcher delegation from Washington county. Governor Marshall as promptly made the motion to admit the Scheffer delegates. Barker again appeared and proposed to lay the whole thing on the table. It was already on the table, but it went there for a second time by the celebrated vote of 26 to 25.

Up to the time these pages go to press Washington county is still lying on the table. At this stage of the proceedings Mr. Langdon moved that the convention proceed to ballot independent of Washington county. Perhaps Mr. Langdon did not realize at the time, in view of his subsequent attitude, that this motion in reality gave up the whole question, and that he really became a party to the result of the convention unwittingly.

The debate over Washington county had enabled Mr. Barker of Isanti to pull himself together and see just where he was at. He discovered that omitting Washington county, there were 25 Fletcher men and 25 Scheffer men in the convention. It also dawned on him that, besides these evenly divided forces, there was Barker, and that if he could keep his wits about him he was it with a capital "I." When he had gotten Washington county buried on the table, Mr. Barker arose and said:

"On behalf of the Republicans of Isanti personally he wished to make a nomination. He was aware that there were two candidates who had waged a hard and hot fight for the nomination. He believed both were able, honorable men. As between the two he had his choice. Owing to the strife he doubted if either could be elected. In the interests of the party, he wished to present a third name—a gentleman from the county of Hennepin, a

Library of Congress

man who was well qualified in every respect and deserving the support of this convention. He said in conclusion:

"I have the honor and the pleasure of presenting the name of the Hon. J. B. Gilfillan."

271

Mr. Fletcher's friends moved that the nomination be made by a majority of all the votes in the call. Mr. Barker amended by moving that the majority of all those voting nominate. Barker's vote carried, as usual, by 26 to 25, and if he had any doubt about it before, then he knew he was it. The chair announced he had a protest from Washington county, but Barker objected to its being read. Hennepin county then endeavored to get a recess, but Barker again objected, and 26 was a greater number than 25. As a remarkable thing, both Fletcher and Scheffer were on the floor consulting with their friends, and Scheffer, though not a delegate, made a speech in behalf of Gilfillan. When the roll of counties was called, Hennepin and the other Fletcher counties refused to vote. The following counties voted for Gilfillan: Anoka 3, Ramsey 15, Isanti 1, Kanabec 1, Chisago 4, Pine 1, Sherburne 1; total 26. Besides Mr. Barker, E. G. Clough was a delegate from Isanti county; but, while Barker ruled the convention to a finish, he could not control Clough, and Clough sulked in silence with the Fletcher men. The chair was obliged to declare that the 26 votes nominated Gilfillan, as there were no votes for any other candidate. A committee of three, with Barker as chairman, was appointed to wait on Mr. Gilfillan and inform him of the nomination. While the committee was absent I busied myself by mingling with the raving Fletcherites, and, writing down their remarks, some of which were as follows:

"He won't accept," said Mr. Fletcher.

"Of course he won't," added Colonel Benton.

"If he does he will be beaten at the polls," said Mr. Langdon.

Library of Congress

"Washington county will give the Democratic nominee 1,500 majority," said Rock Hersey of Stillwater.

"If the Democrats will nominate Capt. Merriman, Hennepin county will give him 3,000 majority," chimed in George K. Shaw of the Journal.

"Mr. Gilfillan is a very good man, but I don't know whether we will support him in Wright county, for he is not the legal nominee," said J. N. Stacy.

"There is not any law to make us vote for him in November," said Dr. Merry of Stillwater.

272

"I don't know what policy we shall pursue until we consult, but this nomination does not bind anyone," said Colonel Benton.

"Wasn't it well managed?" said Governor Marshall.

"Never fear about his accepting; it's all understood," said Capt. Russell Blakely of St. Paul.

About this time there was a noise and bustle on the stairway which presaged the return of the committee with Mr. Gilfillan., The committee had found him quietly at work in his law office, wholly unaware of the commotion which was going on over his name. He told the committee that he wanted to consult with the Hennepin delegation before he decided what to do; that he would go down to the convention with them and talk it over. When he arrived at the convention hall there was a rush of the 17 Hennepin delegates to the ante room where Mr. Gilfillan was ensconced in waiting. Nearly all of them were mad, but some of them madder than others, notably R. B. Langdon, who demanded in so many words that Mr. Gilfillan decline. Mr. Gilfillan is of Scotch descent, and his Scotch blood began to boil over Langdon's fusillade. He appealed to Langdon to be a little more considerate in his speech, and then ensued a general talk lasting perhaps half an hour. The only member of the Hennepin delegation who advised him to accept was C. H. Pettit, and he

Library of Congress

did it in a whisper. Mr. Gilfillan is a strong party man open to reasonable argument, but he cannot be driven or bulldozed. If he had been met with temperate argument results might have been different, but the intemperate zeal of Fletcher's friends, and particularly of Mr. Langdon, changed the situation entirely. Mr. Fletcher himself was especially insistent that Mr. Gilfillan should decline the honor which had come to him unsought. As the conference was about to conclude, Mr. Langdon went to Mr. Gilfillan again with the demand that he should refuse the nomination, accompanied by a threat of defeat at the polls if he insisted upon accepting. This last assault seemed to have settled it, and with Langdon still raging Mr. Gilfillan walked into the convention hall, where he was received with great applause by the Ramsey county delegates. There was no especial cordiality on Mr. Camp's part when Mr. Camp introduced him as the nominee, but Mr. Gilfillan is a calm and collected man and faced the audience, saying:

273

I have not been a disinterested spectator, though little did I dream that I should be a participant in this convention nor in its proceedings. I am not fully informed by what method this conclusion has been reached. We want the utmost harmony to prevail. When I see before me gentlemen whom I know to be patriarchs in the party, and also younger men, bound to me by more recent ties, and this nomination coming from a convention made up of these elements, it is certainly a strong appeal to me not to flinch, but to accept the nomination. If it shall appear in the future that there is any other standard-bearer who can more solidly unite the opposing factions and lead the grand old party to victory, I shall be willing to decline in his favor. Faithfulness and integrity in office, a wholesome revision of the tariff, and establishing a sound currency constitutes about all there is in politics of today; and should your choice be ratified at the polls I shall simply labor with the hope with the aid of Providence that I may return among you not ashamed to look any of you squarely in the face, but with the consciousness that I have discharged the duties imposed by your trust with honesty. This nomination coming from this convention affords me a

Library of Congress

gratification and a pride which I cannot now find words to express. In closing I wish to tender my expression of gratitude for this unsought-for honor.

As soon as Mr. Gilfillan had concluded his speech and Ramsey county had duly applauded, Hennepin sitting in silence, Governor Marshall moved that the convention adjourn. Mr. Marsh still wanted to get in his Washington county protest, and the chair said he would receive it, but simultaneously with that announcement the convention adjourned, and the delegate convention of 50 men and Barker passed into history.

It was generally supposed at the time—a supposition in which I shared myself—that Washburn had inspired Barker to his course, and Fletcher and his friends felt very indignant because Fletcher had always supported Washburn. This largely grew out of the fact that Washburn expressed himself, in an interview in Washington, as very much pleased with the nomination of Gilfillan.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Barker and his brother were young lawyers, one at Cambridge, Isanti county, and the other, who was not in the convention, at Princeton, Mille Lacs county. The Barker who resided at Princeton had been a student in Mr. Gilfillan's office, and when the brothers set up in law business for themselves they frequently came to Mr. Gilfillan for advice and assistance in preparing their legal papers. Mr. Gilfillan is a very obliging gentleman, and took great pleasure in aiding the young men, which he did without asking any compensation whatever. The result was he made warm friends of the young men, warmer perhaps than he even knew himself, and when Barker of Isanti county found his power he turned to the man who had proven himself his friend in the past, Mr. Gilfillan, and concluded to reciprocate, which he did in most elegant shape.

Later the threat, which I have already quoted, of carrying Washington county against Gilfillan, was attempted to be put into effect, but in reality he carried the county by nearly a thousand majority. Hennepin county went against him by 22 votes, while Ramsey county gave him nearly 500 majority. There was a prohibition candidate in the field who received

Library of Congress

978 votes. Gilfillan's total vote in the district was 28,930 and Merriman's (Dem.) 24,496; Gilfillan's majority over Merriman being 4,434.

It may be interesting even at this late day to notice the result in detail by counties, and I accordingly append the following table:

Gilfillan.	Merriman.	Douglas.	Anoka	1,186	784	78	Chisago	1,356	479	3	Hennepin	11,540
				11,562	692		Isanti	1,054	297	2	Kanabec	276
												44
												...
												Pine
												319
												365
												...
												Ramsey
												7,598
												7,119
												68
												Sherburne
												581
												412
												8
												Washington
												2,675
												1,743
												20
												Wright
												2,345
												1,691
												107
												Total
												28,930
												24,496
												978

This affair delayed Mr. Fletcher's arrival in Congress eight years, which is a good while in the lifetime of a man who had reached the age of Fletcher. Mr. Gilfillan served his two years in Congress, and probably made as acceptable and efficient a representative as the district ever had. He was eminently fair to both St. Paul and Minneapolis. Two years later he was defeated by Edmund Rice of St. Paul, Democrat. This was perhaps due 275 more to the greater accomplishments of the Democrats in counting the votes in St. Paul than they had two years previously. The defeat was certainly no reflection upon Mr. Gilfillan personally. After Rice had served his two years, Hon. S. P. Snider (Rep.) of Minneapolis was elected to Congress without Fletcher being a candidate. At the end of Snider's term J. N. Castle (Dem.) of Stillwater served two years, then Fletcher again appeared in the field. Time had seemingly eliminated all animosity, and Fletcher won, serving three terms in Congress, until he, in turn, was defeated by John Lind, Democrat. And thus time, which is the greatest alleviator, smoothed the pathway of the Fourth Congressional district, and Hennepin county became a district by itself.

In the records of political strife in Minnesota it will go down to history, because it is here recorded that there was never but one convention in the state where one man was the whole thing, and 50 other men were simply puppets in his hands.

His name was Barker.

Library of Congress

Soon after the nomination it became quite apparent that there was trouble in Washington county. Mr. Gilfillan, not having devoted his attention to active politics, was not regarded by his enemies as a skillful politician, but he handled Washington county in a manner which demonstrated that he was much better equipped for the game of politics than the Fletcher-Langdon-Sabin coterie had counted on. He visited Washington county in person informally and by appointment, but was met very coldly, in fact almost insultingly, and after spending an afternoon and evening there he left Stillwater, with the decision that he would not visit the county again during the canvass. He employed, however, a bright newspaper man who practically made himself a political detective, and sent him to Stillwater at the time the county convention was to be held to nominate a legislative and county ticket. The reporter or detective was met with open arms and open mouths by the recalcitrant Republicans of Stillwater. The first real developments he struck were through Mr. G. M. Seymour of the firm of Seymour, Sabin & Co. It developed from this conference that there was an organized scheme to carry Washington county, which was normally 276 200 or 300 Republican, for Mr. O. C. Merriman of Minneapolis, the Democratic nominee for Congress.

After leaving Mr. Seymour, the detective consulted with Mr. E. G. Butts, postmaster of Stillwater, and the mine grew richer the more it was worked. The plan, in brief, was to secure \$1,000 from Merriman, \$500 of which was to be used in securing the support of a Republican newspaper, and the remainder was to be used among some of the Scandinavian politicians of the county who were in a position to render valuable service. In the talk with the detective Mr. Butts developed that in his opinion Mr. Seymour was the most available man to handle the money and see that it bore the most fruit, but before the detective had parted with Butts he had consented to handle the money himself, of course with the understanding that nothing should be known of his connection with the matter. Fayette Marsh was also interviewed, and, while he was not as garrulous as Seymour and Butts, his talk fully confirmed all that had been previously ascertained.

Library of Congress

The reporter-detective returned to Minneapolis and wrote out in detail for Mr. Gilfillan the conversations he had, which he had quietly taken down in shorthand as they occurred. To this report he attached his affidavit setting forth the truth of his report, and verified it before a notary, who was a friend of Fletcher's.

Mr. Gilfillan adhered to his determination of not again visiting Stillwater, but he permitted the existence of this affidavit, and a copy of the talk with Messrs. Seymour, Butts and Marsh to make a visit to Stillwater through a local friend. At first they stood "pat" and said Mr. Gilfillan could publish the report if he wanted to. After consultations, however, it dawned upon the Stillwater proposed bolters that they were on dangerous ground. Butts was postmaster; Sabin was United States senator; Blaine was a candidate for the presidency, ardently supported by Senator Sabin, and at that time his election was thought to be certain. Mr. Butts wished to retain his postmastership, and Mr. Sabin wished to retain his political standing in the party as well as with Mr. Blaine, who was supposed to be the coming president. Consequently if Mr. Sabin's own county 277 went in favor of a Democratic member of Congress, when the county was normally Republican he (Sabin) would be very largely held responsible for results. Under such circumstances, too, Mr. Butts could not have hoped for a reappointment as postmaster. When this situation had filtered through the minds of that crowd they became very desirous of carrying Washington county for Mr. Gilfillan, instead of for the Democratic nominee. Mr. Gilfillan assured them that the information he had obtained would not be published in the campaign, but he also assured them that if Washington county went against him at the election the valuable information he had obtained would be published to the world in the Pioneer Press the next day after election.

It is questionable whether any shrewder political work was ever done in the state, and withal there was not the least thing improper in the whole transaction on the part of Mr. Gilfillan and his friends. Mr. Gilfillan had simply secured statements from the mouths of the conspirators themselves which told of the plot, and it was within their power to carry out

Library of Congress

the plot or to abandon it. The latter course was what they vigorously decided to do, and the result was that Washington county gave Mr. Gilfillan nearly 1,000 majority, or, to be exact, 932. The fateful document was accordingly never published, and the first real publicity given to its ever having existed appears in these pages.

With the exception of his last defeat for Congress, the political world has been kind to Loren Fletcher. Personally, I cannot say that he is remarkably magnetic, though a very pleasant gentleman to meet. But he has had in his time a very winning way in politics. He had served five times in the legislature when, at the session of 1881, he concluded to be candidate for speaker. J. V. Daniels of Olmstead county and A. C. Dunn of Faribault county were candidates against him. They were both from the southern part of the state, and Fletcher and his friends concluded they would so divide the strength from that section that it would be an easy victory. Daniels and Dunn realized the situation, and the Sunday preceding the caucus, which was 278 held Monday night, Jan. 3, 1881, Daniels withdrew in favor of Dunn. To almost anyone else save "your Uncle Loren" this would have been an omen of sure defeat; but in his case the union of the opposition was only an inspiration for redoubled effort. When the caucus met J. V. Daniels was selected as chairman, S. B. Sheardown of Winona placed Dunn in nomination. A. C. Hicks of Minneapolis performed a similar office for Fletcher. While there were 89 straight and two Greenback Republicans in the house, but 82 were present in the caucus at the outset, making 42 necessary for a choice. On the informal ballot Fletcher received 53 and Dunn 29. On the formal ballot the vote was increased, Fletcher receiving 64 to 20 for Dunn.

As an indication of the worthlessness of political promises, I quote the following comment from the Pioneer Press of the next morning after the caucus:

Nothing better illustrates the uncertainty of political expectations, than the result of the contest for speakership in the Republican legislative caucus last night. There are 91 Republicans in the House, but only 81 were at first present. The friends of Dunn claimed 47 pledged votes, allowing 27 pledged to Fletcher and 17 to Daniels. Fletcher, on the

other hand, claimed 51 votes, giving Dunn 29. This was in fact the actual result of the first informal ballot, except that an additional member arrived, casting his vote for Fletcher.

Everyone understands that in all such contests the politicians give two or three pledges. In fact, it is necessary to be a cheerful and versatile liar if you are in politics to win. The rival candidates understand this perfectly, and know that somebody will be sold out; but with the sanguine temperament which always characterizes a candidate for office, each candidate thinks that the promise will be kept to him and broken to the other fellows. Of course, he is sometimes right, and then again sometimes he is not. This accounts for many political results, and the heart-burnings which follow out of these various contests.

279

OBSERVATION FORTY-ONE.

The Election of Hon. W. D. Washburn to the Senate and His Defeat of Hon. D. M. Sabin.

When the legislature met in 1889 there was a red-hot fight on for the United States senatorship. D. M. Sabin's first term was expiring, and W. D. Washburn was his principal competitor. The contest began with the beginning of the session by a fight on the speakership. C. H. Graves, of Duluth, was the candidate for speaker of the Sabin forces, and D. F. Morgan, of Albert Lea, the candidate for the Washburn forces. Both candidates and their friends persistently denied that they represented the senatorship, because they felt that they wished to have their contest independent of the greater one. Nevertheless, that was the situation, and, deny it all they please, they could not blind the eyes of the public. The night before the legislature met, the Republicans held a caucus upon the speakership. There were 86 present, necessary to a choice 44. There was only one ballot, which resulted: Graves 50, Morgan 36.

This added to the confidence of the Sabin forces, and correspondingly depressed Washburn and his friends. Washburn got up a caucus of his own, confined entirely to his

Library of Congress

friends, at which he had 35 present. As there were 125 Republicans in the Legislature, a caucus of 35 was not very encouraging. Albeit among the 35 were many of the leading Republican politicians in the state, so that that caucus really counted more than it represented numerically.

Of course it would not do for Mr. Washburn to be a candidate for anything without having his old-time enemy, Mr. Donnelly, in the field, and he was there. He announced himself as the candidate for the Senate representing the Farmers Alliance. I do not think Mr. Donnelly had the slightest idea he could win, but he wanted to do something to defeat Washburn. His wise policy would have been to make an alliance with Sabin rather than have gone off as a candidate for himself. But his desire for political life would not permit this, and the consequence was that he was a full-fledged candidate to the end. He hardly had a sufficient following for a caucus, but he managed to have a State Farmers Alliance annual meeting just at the opening of the session of the Legislature, and that annual meeting unanimously endorsed him for Senator.

There was the usual talk about caucus or no caucus. The Pioneer Press was urgently advocating a caucus, and citing the disruption of six years before, which had elected Sabin, as a reason for holding a caucus this time to bring the party together.

It was finally decided by the Washburn-Sabin forces to have a caucus to nominate a Senator. The caucus was formally held on the evening of January 17th. By agreement among the aspirants it was arranged that there should be no preliminary contest for chairman. Neither side wished to show its hand prematurely. By mutual agreement, Mr. M. J. Daniels, a very fair man, was selected to preside. After the usual preliminaries of organization, Hon. C. B. Buckman nominated Mr. Sabin, and A. T. Stebbins, of Rochester, and W. G. Ward, of Waseca, seconded the nomination. D. F. Morgan, of Albert Lea, nominated Mr. Washburn, and C. R. Davis, Representatives Crossfield, Forbes and Smith, seconded the nomination. Mr. Hompe, of Fergus Falls, brought up the rear of the procession by nominating Donnelly. The vote was a secret ballot by roll-call; as each

Library of Congress

man's name was called he responded by dropping his ballot in a hat. Before the roll-call began, Senator Daniels announced that 121 were present, and that 61 would be necessary for a choice. The first ballot was allowed to be informal, without any motion to that effect, and it stood: Washburn 52, Sabin 43, Donnelly 15, Nelson 7, Start, 2, Cole, 1, Strait 1. That vote was quite depressing 281 to the Sabin forces, but the caucus went on and took three more ballots.

First. Second Third. Washburn 58 56 62 Sabin 46 55 54 Donnelly 10 5 4 Nelson 3 2 Start 2 3 2 Cole 2 1

When Washburn lost 2 on the second ballot and Sabin gained 9 on the same ballot everybody thought Sabin was the winner, and there was great jubilation among Sabin's friends, both inside and outside of the caucus, but the third and last ballot told another story. Both Washburn and Sabin were present at the capitol where the caucus was held, and both were brought into the caucus—Washburn to rejoice and Sabin to mourn. Sabin made a very manly speech, showing as little disappointment as it was possible for him to show under the circumstances. He claimed that he had 68 votes positively pledged, and I personally know that this was true. Still the highest vote he received was 13 less than was promised. But that is nothing unusual in politics.

Of course after the caucus adjourned there was the usual jubilation. The Merchants Hotel, which was the headquarters of both candidates at that time, was packed with a seething mass of humanity, which almost made the walls of the spacious corridors bulge outwards. But everybody was happy—except those who were unhappy.

In the Senate the next day, Senator W. G. Ward sprung quite a sensation by offering the following:

Whereas, Charges of wholesale bribery in a caucus contest for the position of United States senator from the State of Minnesota are made by divers citizens of said state; and,

Library of Congress

Whereas, Evidence, voluntarily presented by members and citizens indicate that large sums of money were corruptly used to influence the votes of members of the legislature of Minnesota in the caucus for United States, senator, held on Thursday evening, January 17, 1889; therefore,

Resolved, That a committee of three members of this senate be appointed by the president of the senate to investigate the charges and rumors of bribery and corruption.

282

No notice of debate was given, and the preamble and resolution were immediately passed. The chair appointed Senators Ward, Edwards and Pope as members of the committee.

Senator Ward was an ardent Sabin man and a strong opponent of Washburn, and his resolution was intended to be aimed at Washburn. In interviews Sabin disclaimed having any knowledge of or sympathy with the movement. There was doubtless some ground for the charges, and while no one supposes that either Washburn or Sabin personally did any corrupt act in the matter, it is well understood in politics that the principals do not do that kind of business themselves. It was the general feeling at the time that if there had been anything of that kind done, both candidates were tarred with the same stick.

The next day the House passed a similar resolution ordering an investigation and appointed a committee of seven representatives to investigate. Mr. Ward promptly called his committee together, and employed W. W. Erwin, the famous criminal lawyer, as counsel. Senator Edwards, who was one of the Washburn leaders, refused to proceed without counsel for his side as well, and after a good deal of controversy C. D. O'Brien was employed by Senator Edwards to represent the Washburn side of the matter.

The investigation proceeded but without developing much more than the idle talk of the hotel lobbies, which as a rule is largely falsehood, inspired by copious draughts of the flowing bowl.

Library of Congress

The object of the investigation was evidently to lay the groundwork for a bolt from the caucus, and the question of a bolt was openly discussed. It is to Senator Sabin's credit to say that he did not encourage any such proceeding. If he had it is quite likely there would have been a bolt. But he was man enough to admit that he had been defeated and was ready to submit. The result of the investigation brought about one unusual matter. Under the law of Congress the vote was to be taken in the respective houses the following Tuesday, and it was quite a short time for the committee to make its investigation and report. The consequence was that 283 on Tuesday evening the Senate met in secret session and had the official reporter, Mr. George N. Hillman, of St. Paul, read the testimony from his stenographic notes, he not having had time to transcribe them. This occupied all the evening, and after the reading of the testimony a debate followed in the Senate as to what should be done about it. The committee made no recommendation, leaving each Senator to decide for himself what he thought about it. The result of all this was that the Senate decided, about midnight, to proceed to vote for United States senator. On that vote Washburn received 24 votes, E. M. Wilson 3; 15 were present who refused to vote, and 5 were absent. Of the 15 refusing to vote, Crandall, Dodge and Traux were Republicans; the other 12 were Democrats. C. B. Buckman, who had been Sabin's leader in the Legislature, had been reflected on, not particularly in the testimony, but in the common street talk; and prior to taking the vote the Senate passed the following resolution:

“Resolved, That the members of the senate hereby express their confidence in the honor and integrity of our honored colleague, C. B. Buckman, and resent all imputations growing out of the recent bribery investigation reflecting upon his good name.”

The House committee did business a little better than the Senate, as they presented a formal report, which concluded as follows:

Library of Congress

We take pleasure in reporting that we find no evidence that any member of the legislature has been connected with any attempt to bribe, or corrupt any other member, or that any member has been paid or received any consideration for his vote at said caucus.

(Signed) E. SEVATSON; J. M. DIMENT, A. T. STEBBINS, F. C. STEVENS, JOHN B. HOMPE, JOHN DAY SMITH, F. E. SEARLE.

The House then proceeded to vote, and their vote stood: Washburn 80, Durant (Dem.) 9, Start 8, Wilson 2, Clapp 1. While Mr. Washburn had received a majority of the votes in the House he had not received a majority in the Senate, and 284 consequently a vote in joint convention was required the next day. At that time the vote stood as follows: Washburn 107, Durant 20, Start 9, Wilson 2, Bowen 1, Clapp 1, J. P. Rea, 1. Of course this settled the whole matter and Washburn was declared duly elected. The bribery investigation blew over in a short time, and has long since been entirely forgotten. I only reproduce it now because it is history.

In an authorized interview after the election was completed, Mr. Sabin said this:

I am entirely serene and not in the least soreheaded. The campaign we have run against the combined interests of Minneapolis influences and capital, with all of its ramifications, and the old Indian ring of St. Paul, is to my mind one of the most vigorous and healthy ever conducted. I am simply amazed at the close shave of success we had.

Speaking of Senator Buckman he said this:

“Senator Buckman is a high-toned gentleman and faithful adherent. He is my friend and has been through this and other contests, and I honor him for it. He has my most hearty thanks for his loyalty.”

Washburn proved to be, like Senator Sabin, a one-term Senator, as is more fully explained in another chapter. Mr. Sabin's financial fortunes had become badly shattered, partly by

Library of Congress

the attention which he gave to politics. He was, however, a very resolute and hopeful man, and on retiring from the Senate took up the business end of existence with great hopes of recuperating his fortune, and of at some time again entering political life. To some extent he recuperated in business. He had large iron mining operations and finally built a logging railroad in Wisconsin, which bid fair at one time to place him upon his business feet. But death came in the midst of his plans; and it always seemed to me that after the political and business calamities which befel him death must have been a rather welcome visitor. He died in Chicago, and was buried at his old home, in Stillwater.

To show the mutations of human life, it can be said that the attendance at his funeral was probably not one-fourth the number of those who were daily gathered under his banner at the Merchants Hotel for nearly a month prior to the Legislative contest. Still, so wags the world—especially the political world.

285

OBSERVATION FORTY-TWO.

Knute Nelson's Contest With Kindred and His Success.

The following is the opening paragraph of a telegram I sent my paper, the St. Paul Globe, from Detroit, Minn., on the 12th of July, 1882:

Hell reigneth. The Lord be praised. If the religious sentiments of these phrases seem to be mixed I can assure you that it corresponds to the political situation in the Fifth district.

That was the famous day when the double-headed convention was held at Detroit and evolved Knute Nelson and C. F. Kindred as Republican candidates for Congress. The Fifth district was a monster territorially and in number of counties, having 28, as follows:

Library of Congress

Aitkin, Benton, Becker, Beltrami, Big Stone, Carleton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Itasca, Kittson, Lake, Marshall, Morrison, Mille Lacs, Otter Tail, Pope, Polk, Stearns, Stevens, St. Louis, Traverse, Todd, Wadena and Wilkin.

It was the first election since the Fifth district had been constructed, and the rivalry for the nomination was intense. The leading candidates were Knute Nelson, of Alexandria, and C. F. Kindred, of Brainerd, though C. A. Gilman, of St. Cloud, and C. H. Graves, of Duluth, were in the field as well. Mr. Kindred was wealthy, and he spared no expense in materializing his boom. Kindred clubs were formed, brass bands were hired, printed matter was sent out, and sufficient paraphernalia gathered to run a national campaign. The Kindred 286 forces went into the work with the enthusiasm born of youth and inexperience, while the Nelson forces stolidly relied upon his strength among his countrymen to carry him through.

At first the county conventions called to send delegates to the district convention at Detroit were conducted with some degree of fairness, though in every case the contest would be a sharp one. After one or two county conventions had split and sent double delegates, a spirit of recklessness broke out, and whichever side rightfully had control of the county convention the other proceeded to make an excuse for a split and send a contending delegation.

There was absolutely no attempt to be fair in this contest for the Congressional nomination. This statement applies to both the Nelson and the Kindred forces, but a good deal more to the Kindred than to the Nelson men, because Nelson was really stronger, and had a more substantial backing than Kindred. Kindred in reality had but little backing but his money, and it was the deliberate plan whenever Nelson had carried a county for the Kindred men to come in and hold another convention, appointing a double delegation. Of course this bore the usual fruit of a split in the convention, and if the Scandinavian element had not been so enormously strong in Northern Minnesota it would have resulted in Knute Nelson's defeat, as well as Kindred's. As it was, Nelson proved invincible, and not

Library of Congress

only won in that campaign, but went on to win in the future, until he had achieved national renown.

In some cases an extra county convention was held without any pretense of authority, and it was very evident that Nelson and Kindred, or their friends, intended to make a double district convention. The result was that when the district convention was due to meet, there were only 18 out of 28 counties which could lay any claim to being "regular." When the Nelson and Kindred forces separated and held two conventions there were 20 counties represented in the Nelson convention and 23 in the Kindred department. Here was an aggregate of delegates from 43 counties in a district which contained but 28. The contests made the excess.

287

The call for the convention directed it to assemble at Bowman's hall, in Detroit, Minn., at 1 p. m., on the 12th of July. The interest and excitement was immense, and all signs pointed to a bloody riot as the result rather than to a harmonious convention. The delegates and the contestants aggregated 125, and it is no exaggeration to say that there were between three and four hundred outsiders present, as friends of the respective candidates. The little town was fairly wild, and I venture to say the five saloons never did so big a business before nor since.

As usual the contestants began sparring for "regularity." The first point was to secure the temporary chairman, in order to capture the committee on credentials. It is usual for the chairman of the district committee to call the convention to order. Geo. H. Johnson, of Detroit, was the chairman, and though he professed friendship for Nelson, he was, in reality, a Kindred man. There were nine members of the committee present, and finding that they could not agree on any plan of organization, the Nelson men on the committee, by a vote of five, removed Johnson as chairman and appointed Lieut. Gov. Barto, of Stearns, in his place. They considered three plans of organization: Admitting only uncontested delegates, admitting all and let them fight it out in convention, admitting those

Library of Congress

from counties which the chairman of the county committee would certify were "regular." The Nelson men on the committee insisted on absolutely naming the delegates who should be allowed to enter the hall, but this Johnson would not permit, and so it was a fight from the start. Detroit was a red-hot Kindred town, and the sheriff swore in 30 deputies, mostly, perhaps all, favorable to Kindred. The hall would not contain the crowd, and the sheriff and his deputies were on hand to prevent any but delegates entering. The Nelson men had erected a tent near the town, and there they gathered to march to the hall. The Kindred men, to guard against accidents, had smuggled a force into the hall at 11 a. m., and they had lunch sent in and camped there. When the Nelson men marched in a body from the tent to the hall they were astonished to find all the front seats occupied. 288 There was great disturbance at the foot of the stairs. A good many Kindred delegates were still on the outside and all of the Nelson men. A Kindred and a Nelson man stood at the foot of the stairs and identified their respective delegates, and the sheriffs would only allow those to go up who were vouched for. The early camping in the hall of the Kindred men gave them a good many outsiders who had come to fight, if necessary, and in a square battle, which was expected, the Nelson men would have been thrashed. I think the fact that the Kindred men had by their device, gotten their forces in the hall in such numbers was a peace measure. There were probably a hundred men present in the hall with pistols in their pockets, and it was a wonder some one did not fire the first shot. If any one had, it would have been gory before the last one was fired.

Johnson refused to be deposed from the chairmanship because he was appointed by the State Central Committee, and Capt. H. A. Castle, Secretary of the State Central Committee, was there to certify to the fact. It was 1:15 when Johnson struggled through the crowd to get to the platform, and Barto was close behind. When they reached the platform Johnson announced that they had decided to clear the hall, and then he and Barto would issue tickets. Barto said they would give Nelson and Kindred 100 each and Gilman and Graves 26 each. The Kindred men objected on the ground that Gilman and Graves were really for Nelson, and hence it would give the Nelson men the largest

Library of Congress

number. The Kindred men were satisfied as it was. While the controversy was going on, a Kindred man nominated E. G. Holmes, of Detroit, for chairman. Johnson put the motion and declared it carried. Holmes bounded to the platform in a twinkling and started his convention. The Nelson men were a little behind, but not much. Some Nelson man made a motion to elect S. G. Comstock, of Moorhead, temporary chairman, and Barto put the motion so quickly that Comstock leaped to the platform and began the Nelson convention only a few seconds behind the Kindred. Then there was pandemonium let loose. Every one seemed to be yelling at the same time. Holmes and Comstock stood side by side and their respective adherents would rush to the front and make motions which the chairman would declare carried. After about five minutes of this scene, ex-Sheriff Mertz, of Brainerd, a very resolute man and a warm friend of Kindred, jumped on the platform and, grabbing Comstock, tried to pull him off, saying, "You have no business here." It was scarcely a second before 30 or 40 men were on the stage to aid Comstock and Mertz respectively, and they were a good deal hustled about. Comstock stood his ground well and resisted being dragged off the platform, but did not strike a blow. The crowd had overturned the reporters' table and we had mounted an extemporized table to get a view of the fight. As the excitement was at its highest, crash went our table and we were all tumbled promiscuously to the floor. I believe that little accident was providential. It made a laugh, and laughter and anger are not close friends. It also diverted attention for a moment and by the time we had picked ourselves up from the floor, the sheriff, with 10 or 12 deputies, was on the platform commanding the peace and hustling men off the stage. Partial quiet was secured, when Johnson declared that he would recognize but one chairman, and that was Holmes. Barto, in reply, insisted that he (Barto) was chairman of the district committee by a vote of five out of nine. Capt. Castle's statement was then made, as already mentioned, and the Kindred men yelled.

Johnson then proceeded to read the call for the convention, a proceeding which should have been done before the chairman was selected. He was nearly through when it occurred to Barto to read it also, and he began on the same document. And then a fresh

Library of Congress

riot sprung up. Not a word of the reading could be heard, and eight or ten were trying to make speeches in the midst of the yells. Johnson finally shouted an order to clear the stage of every one but the committee and the reporters. That would have removed both Holmes and Comstock. He said he had hired the hall and would have it cleared. On this announcement a Nelson man shouted: "I move the convention adjourn to the tent on the prairie." Comstock put the motion and declared it carried. Johnson 19 290 was shouting in the meantime that the "regular" convention would be held in that hall and invited every one to remain. Comstock, notwithstanding he had declared the convention adjourned to the tent, did not want to lose any points on "regularity." He declined to go unless he was put out, so that he would have valid grounds for holding a convention somewhere else. As all the deputy sheriffs were Kindred men, one of them accommodated him by walking with him to the head of the stairs. H. L. Gordon, of Minneapolis (not a delegate or even a resident of the district) mounted a chair and urged the Nelson, Graves and Gilman men to leave. A deputy sheriff grabbed him and escorted him to the door as a disturber of the peace.

The doors had been guarded both from inside and out to keep the crowd from rushing in, and the stairway was so packed the Nelson men had great difficulty in leaving. Finally Mr. Bowman, the owner of the hall, got the doors open and spiked them, so that if there was another row upstairs there would be a chance to run. But the Kindred men remained in the hall, while the Nelson forces met at the tent, and two love feasts were set in motion.

Nelson may be said to have entered prominent political life direct from the tented field. The prairie breezes which fanned his brow that sultry July afternoon have been a kind harbinger to him and wafted him onward and upward until he reached the Senate. The only object of holding the convention in the tent must have been to put the crowd in a hot box, for it was literally a case of "standing room only," there being no seats or tables within, and it might as well have been held on the open prairie. But there was harmony, because all of those who were opposed to Nelson were attending the convention at Bowman's hall.

Library of Congress

S. G. Comstock brought his right to be chairman at the hall to the tent. It was a case where a man took up his rank and walked. He accordingly called the tent convention to order and proceeded at once to prove that that was the “regular” convention and any other would be a fraud. He presented the report of the district committee, which the chairman, 291 Mr. Johnson, of Detroit, would not recognize. That report disclosed that the district committee had acted as a committee of credentials as well, and had named delegates from 20 counties who were entitled to seats, leaving eight counties still to be heard from. This report was promptly adopted, and a few minutes later the platform was reported. It was about the usual style of platforms, except that it was bitter in its denunciation of Kindred and his followers, accusing them of corruption. Of course, it claimed to be the only original, blown in the bottle, “regular” convention.

When it came to nominations, Halvor Steenerson, of Crookston, sent up Nelson's balloon; C. A. Gilman was inflated by Gov. Barto, while Graves was depicted in glowing colors by D. G. Cash, of Duluth. Gilman and Graves had been candidates on the theory that Nelson and Kindred would so divide the delegates as to make a third man a necessity. They had allied themselves to the Nelson wing in the hope that if it proved that Nelson could not obtain it, his strength would go to them. Gilman and Graves had antagonized Kindred as sharply as had Nelson, and when the district convention split their forces had no other recourse save adhering to the Nelson wing. As a consequence, it was nonsense to present their names at the tent convention, as that crowd was overwhelmingly for Nelson. But they went through the motions and took an informal ballot, which stood: Nelson, 44; Graves, 7; Gilman, 10. The formal ballot gave it to Nelson by 44 votes to 15 for the other two combined. Nelson responded with an acceptance speech which pledged his loyalty and “regularity” to the party, while insisting that the Kindred crowd represented everything which was bad, corrupt and “irregular,” Gilman, Graves, H. L. Gordon, of Minneapolis, and Albert Scheffer, of St. Paul, all made ratification meeting speeches, and the Nelson campaign was launched.

Library of Congress

While all this was going on in the tent, the Kindred men were working right along with their convention at Bowman's hall. The temporary chairman, Mr. Holmes, kept shouting, while the Nelson men were leaving, that the only "regular" convention would be in that hall, but blood was up and no one halted. When the Nelson supporters had vanished the Kindred convention went ahead more harmoniously, if anything, than the tent affair, because they did not have any other candidate than Kindred, even nominally. Geo. H. Johnson, the chairman of the district committee, was made permanent chairman. Johnson's speech on taking the chair was something unique. He declared that he had been a supporter of Nelson and had prepared a speech in his favor. He then proceeded with quite a eulogy of Nelson as a soldier and citizen, but now that Nelson had "bolted," as the speaker claimed, his party loyalty compelled him to stand by Kindred. That was cool, as he had been for Kindred all of the time. He then proceeded to claim that he had prepared to so rule as to admit 36 Kindred delegates and 42 for the field against him, and that Comstock and Barto had originally agreed to this, but had finally attempted to depose him from the chairmanship of the committee, because he would not consent to have the committee pass upon the credentials of the delegates, and actually name those entitled to seats.

Of course it took but a few minutes to have the committee on credentials report the Kindred delegates as contestants and all were admitted, and if any delegation was not full a proxy was supplied. The resolutions did not even take the trouble to declare loyalty to the Republican party, as the Nelson platform did. They were entirely devoted to claiming "regularity" and denouncing the other side as "dishonorable, despicable and most infamous." C. B. Sleeper, of Brainerd, named Kindred in a glowing speech, and no other name was presented. The roll call gave him 64 votes—all that were cast. Here were 64 votes in a convention which if full would have had 78. Nelson had 61 in his convention, which gave an aggregate of 125, or a surplus of 47 more than there would have been if only one convention had been held. Kindred was brought in and accepted, deprecating the trouble and the bringing in of the nationality question.

Library of Congress

The evening in that little town was quite a wild one. Kindred had brought two or three brass bands, and they headed a procession which marched about the streets yelling like 293 madmen. In fact, they were very mad men. In order to turn an honest penny the ladies of Detroit had opened a hall to give refreshments for the benefit of the village cemetery association. Kindred felt so good that he gave \$100 outright to the association, and the boys on his side said that they wanted to finish up the cemetery to have a proper place for Nelson when they got through with him in the fall. As Kindred furnished the political corpse in November, he was wise in dedicating a cemetery at the beginning of the campaign.

There were hot discussions between the partisans until the trains left, but no absolute violence, though the air was frequently split with yells and emphatic adjectives.

The question of which was the “regular” convention was the great controversy throughout the campaign. It was very hard to ascertain the truth, for both the Nelson and Kindred men had resorted to all kinds of tricks known to the political trade to capture delegates. I am inclined to think, outside of leaving the hall at Detroit where the convention was called to meet, Nelson had the best of the “regularity,” but with that thrown in Kindred's favor, it gave him the “regular” advantage. In 1868 almost the entire excuse for calling Donnelly a bolter was because he was nominated for Congress at a different place from the hall designated in the call. The only way the Nelson men could have been more regular was to have remained and had a fight, but as a stray bullet might have hit a newspaper man I was always willing to waive the irregularity of their departure from the hall. As the Kindred men, by the coup d'etat of getting possession of the hall at an early hour, had two to one on the inside of the building, they could have thrown the Nelson men out bodily, and that would have made it “regular” for them to have gone to another place for their convention, on the ground that they had been physically assaulted. I give this as a legal ruling on political regularity and as an inducement to bring on a fight, if such a condition of affairs ever exists again. The Republican state committee sat in judgment on the “regularity” and decided that Nelson was the “regular” nominee. How circumstances alter cases and how worthless

Library of Congress

such decisions are was 294 illustrated by the decision against Donnelly in 1868 (which I have already noted) for doing exactly what was approved in Nelson's case in 1882.

Next to the "regularity" problem, the point to be settled was what would the Democrats do? The Nelson men did not feel that they had much hope from the Democratic votes, and were anxious to have a Democrat nominated. The Kindred men thought they could secure a good many Democrats, and were equally anxious to have no Democratic nominee. It seemed almost certain that without a Democratic nominee, Nelson would be defeated. The Democrats, at first seemed inclined to give Kindred the chance, but they finally held a convention, Sept. 7, at Fergus Falls. E. P. Barnum, of Stearns county, Robert Miller, of Otter Tail, and R. C. Moore, of Stearns, were candidates. There was no excitement at the convention, and the attendance was not large. One ballot did the business, standing: Barnum, 49; Miller, 18; Moore, 9; scattering, 10. Strenuous efforts were made by the Kindred people to get Barnum to withdraw. All of these efforts (and some of these were very liberal) were unavailing, and Barnum remained his party standard bearer, though certain of defeat.

The canvass was intensely personal and exciting. Kindred spent money lavishly and the Nelson forces had a good deal. Kindred had workers in every county, doing nothing else from the time he was nominated, in July, until November. In many cases where newspapers were hostile he established new ones. His army of clerks and his literary bureau were expensive. Brass bands, torchlight processions, special trains, etc., were the common occurrence, and when you come to spread this out over 28 big counties, many of them having to be canvassed by private conveyance to make up the poll of the district, the expense amounted to something enormous. Well informed men claimed at the time that Kindred expended \$225,000. This may be too large, but I think it is extremely conservative to say that he put in \$150,000. Minnesota is not likely to see the counterpart of that fight again. Mr. Kindred is now a resident of Philadelphia. I hear 295 he has been lucky in some speculations and has largely, perhaps entirely, recovered his fortune, which was so sadly

Library of Congress

shattered by that campaign. He was the most liberal and energetic political plunger the state has ever seen.

The vote in November, electing Nelson, stood: Nelson, 16,956; Kindred, 12,238; Barnum, 6,248. Two years before, in the presidential campaign, which always brings out the vote, those same counties gave Garfield (Rep.) 15,442, and Hancock (Dem.) 8,405. In 1881, just one year previous, the Republican vote in the district for governor was 13,831 and 6,595 Democratic. This shows that Barnum was strong with the Democrats and held well up to his party vote, but the Republicans exceeded their presidential vote of 1880 by nearly 14,000, and their gubernatorial vote of 1881, the previous year, by nearly 16,000. As Barnum only fell behind Hancock's vote about 2,000, and was only 347 below the Democratic vote of '81, the great influx of voters must have been Republicans. In John Hay's famous poem, "Little Breeches," he tells of a little boy being transported from the embrace of the deadly winter storms to the warm sheep fold, and says:

"How did he get thar? Angels."

I am inclined to attribute the sudden irruption of Republican voters in that district to the same divine agency and let it stand at that. But no one disputes that Knute Nelson's original election to Congress was a wave from the North sea. We used to sing, "In the North sea lived a whale." Things have changed. He seems to have migrated to Minnesota and brought his whole family.

296

OBSERVATION FORTY-THREE.

The Great Contest in the First District in 1880.

Among the many exciting political scrimmages in the state, one of the notable ones was the Congressional contest in the First district in 1880. The district was both numerically and territorially large, comprising the following counties:

Library of Congress

Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Jackson, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Rock, Steele, Waseca, Watonwan and Winona.

These counties were the most populous of any in the state, outside of the cities, and contained over 40,000 voters. Mark H. Dunnell of Owatonna, was serving his fifth term and 10th year in Congress, and a good many Republicans thought it time that he gave way before old age had incapacitated many able men in the district from filling the place. As usual with such long terms of service, Dunnell had built up a machine, and the outsiders considered it a good time to smash it. They made a gallant fight in that direction.

The plan as deliberately formulated by the anti-Dunnell forces was to spring as many "favorite sons" from different counties as possible. It was only in this manner that some of the counties could be carried against Dunnell. It was to this end that Freeborn county instructed for J. A. Lovely, Fillmore for H. S. Barrett, Houston for James O'Brien, Faribault for J. B. Wakefield, Waseca for W. G. Ward and Blue Earth for E. P. Freeman. It was the field against Dunnell, none of the candidates being very anxious to secure the nomination personally but all intensely interested in having a new deal. The convention which was due to consist of 125 delegates, was called to 297 meet at Ward's Opera House, in Waseca, July 7, 1880, and it was there in force. Both sides held caucuses the night before the convention and hugged the delusive phantom of hope for a "regular majority" on their side. Each resolved to war to the death.

With the usual tricks of the trade, both sides had indulged in securing contesting delegations. The anti-Dunnell forces had really been beaten in Jackson county, but they had a delegation at Waseca from there, just the same. Mower county was also a double-header, but there was a little basis for a contest in that county. The Judge Sherman Page riot was at its zenith and no convention could be held in that county without a row. The Page forces were anti-Dunnell and, of course, the anti-Page men were for Dunnell. Freeborn county was overwhelmingly for Lovely, or anybody to beat Dunnell, but on the

Library of Congress

old theory of fighting the devil with fire the Dunnell men deliberately made up a bogus delegation from that county. They did not pretend that it had any basis but it was simply presented to shut Freeborn county out on any preliminary organization, on the ground that the committee on credentials must first determine which were the legitimate delegates. When the convention split in twain the Dunnellites did not even have the cheek to admit their bogus Freeborn delegates, though there was no one to object. Laying aside Freeborn county and leaving only Jackson and Mower contested, the anti-Dunnell forces had 56 to Dunnell's 54 on a preliminary organization. With Freeborn excluded, on account of a contest, the Dunnell forces would be in control, and get the preliminary machinery—which was equivalent to success.

When the crucial hour arrived W. Holt, chairman of the district committee, mounted the platform and called the convention to order. He announced that Freeborn, Mower and Jackson counties, having contested delegations, would not be allowed to vote, until the committee on credentials had reported. He also stated that the district committee had instructed him to call Earle S. Youmans, of Winona, to the chair as temporary presiding officer. Holt had scarcely begun to make his announcement before S. P. Childs, of Faribault county, was 298 standing on the floor in front of him, yelling "Mr. Chairman," "Mr. Chairman," at the top of his voice. When Sam is in condition he can yell "right smart" and he did his biggest on that occasion. Holt was conveniently deaf and blind for the time, and went right along as though Childs did not exist. In this dilemma Childs mounted a chair and nominated W. W. Braden of Filmore (afterwards state auditor) for temporary chairman, put the vote, and amid the yells of both factions, declared it carried. Braden and Youmans both reached the platform at about the same moment and, amid the greatest excitement and tumult, the two conventions, in one room, were inaugurated. D. F. Morgan of Albert Lea was chosen secretary by the antis, and E. C. Huntington of the Windom Reporter, secretary for the Dunnellites. From this time on there was no attempt at harmony, each side simply attempting to yell the loudest. The antis had the most lung power and drowned out their own and the Dunnell proceedings as well. It was an inspiring scene which I much

Library of Congress

enjoyed at the time. The Dunnell forces ranged themselves on the right hand side of the room, facing the platform, and the anti-Dunnell forces took the left hand side. Braden and Morgan captured the only table and chairs and both sides went merrily along. The coolness and good nature of the respective chairmen and especially of Youmans, probably prevented a physical encounter, which many times seemed likely to occur. One blow on either side would have resulted in bloodshed, but they contented themselves with shaking their fists at and denouncing each other.

The Dunnell forces had no delegates from Blue Earth, Fairbault, Freeborn and Houston counties, and only one from Dodge, while the anti-Dunnell forces had no delegates from Cottonwood, Martin, Murray, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Rock, Steele, Watonwan and Winona. Each side had, of course, the contested delegates of their own faction, except that the Dunnell men did not have the temerity to admit the Dunnell men from Freeborn. D. F. Morgan nominated J. A. Lovely of Freeborn, J. W. Wheat nominated H. S. Barrett of Filmore, S. P. Childs named J. B. Wakefield of Faribault, and W. D. L. Collester presented W. G. Ward of Waseca. It took six ballots for 299 the anti-Dunnell men to agree. On the first ballot Barrett had 24, Lovely 15, Wakefield 27 and Ward 7. After the third ballot Wakefield dropped out and the vote stood on the fifth ballot—Barrett 27, Lovely 14 and Ward 34. On the sixth and last ballot Ward received all the votes, 75 in number, and was declared the nominee, amid cheers that seemed loud enough to be heard throughout the county.

While this was going on the Dunnell people had also been doing business. Ex-Governor Miller of Worthington, nominated Dunnell in one of his whooping speeches. The informal ballot stood: Dunnell 68, Bassett 3. The formal ballot was Dunnell 67, Wakefield 1. Mr. Youmans then announced that a ratification meeting would be held at once on the street in front of the hotel and the Dunnell forces marched out, leaving the Ward men in possession of the opera house. They proceeded to ratify in the hall, making bitter speeches, denouncing the Dunnell forces as bolters, while on the street the Dunnell men were singing the same song relative to the Ward forces. Both factions endeavored to excel

Library of Congress

each other by resolving in favor of the Republican national ticket and pledging their loyal support to the party in general.

The Ward forces at once began setting up the pins for "regularity." They wired a card to the Pioneer Press that night signed by W. W. Braden, J. H. Baker, S. P. Childs, H. S. Bassett, G. C. Chamberlain, J. B. Wakefield, E. P. Freeman, E. Thompson, G. C. Burt, J. A. Lovely and O. C. Peterson, setting forth, among other things, that they had 71 regularly elected delegates and 64 uncontested, which was a majority of the convention. On the 18th of July, Ward wrote to Dunnell proposing that they both withdraw and a new convention be held, called by the Republican state central committee, or the two district committees, the names of neither of them to be allowed to go before the new convention. This would have accomplished all the antis were playing for, the defeat of Dunnell, and though a loud sentiment went up in favor of this plan it could not be expected to meet Dunnell's approval. Dunnell replied to Ward saying he had referred the matter to his committee. The committee met at Owatonna on the 27th of July and rejected Ward's 300 proposal, but offered to submit the matter to the Republican state central committee, to determine which one should remain in the field. Ward in turn referred this to his committee. His committee met at Albert Lea, August 5th and rejected the offer of Dunnell's committee, renewing Ward's original offer with the proviso that the new convention be held not later than October 7th. They gave Dunnell ten days to accept. Dunnell replied on August 16th rejecting all overtures, saying, "to the forum of the people I will go." And the fight was on to a finish.

Meantime the Democrats had been quiet but interested spectators. Here was their seeming opportunity. In 1878 Dunnell had received 18,613 votes in the district and Meighen (People's and Democratic) 12,845. It certainly looked as though, with the natural increase of the presidential year, added to Meighen's vote, the Democrats would win. They nominated Hon. H. R. Wells of Preston, and went into the fight with vim. The Republicans, outside of the district, and many in the district, thought the fight was lost. While Ward made an active campaign, Dunnell surpassed himself. It was the fight of his life and

Library of Congress

he made it desperately and gallantly. He spoke night and day for the remainder of the canvass and but for a vigorous constitution would have gone to his grave instead of to Congress. He had written a letter to Postmaster Harwood of Austin prior to the convention asking him to "sound Jones" relative to his nomination, referring to Ira Jones, a prominent politician of the town. An Austin paper also started the story that Dunnell was planning to build a residence at Owatonna and when the back pay or so-called "salary grab" passed Congress, he telegraphed his architect, "go to hauling sand." This was entirely untrue, but it was "good enough Morgan" for the campaign and it is believed by many to this day. "Sound Jones" and "go to hauling sand" were the watchwords of the anti-Dunnell campaign. The result absolutely surprised Dunnell himself, as the vote stood:

Dunnell 22,392

Ward 7,656

Wells 13,768

301

If the election had taken place in August instead of November I believe Ward would have polled a larger vote than Dunnell, but the last six weeks of the campaign he lost headway. The state committee and all the machinery of the party was thrown against him. As election day approached it became evident that it was Dunnell or a Democrat. This added to Dunnell's tremendous canvass, and the fact that Ward, though one of the most generous, whole-souled and honorable of men, was no match for Dunnell on the stump, made the result as it was. But the next time it was Milo White and not Dunnell who was the Republican nominee. The medicine of 1880 had worked. I regret to say that since this book has been in the hands of the printer Dunnell has been called to a higher tribunal than the Republican party of the First district. Mr. Ward preceded him some years ago and the First district is now harmonious under Mr. Tawney's leadership. Time and death smooths away, the animosities of political life and when it is all over we say "Cui Bono."

OBSERVATION FORTY-FOUR.

A Series of Gubernatorial Campaigns.

Hon. Knute Nelson had very plain sailing for the governorship in 1892, ex-Lieut. Gov. G. S. Ives of St. Peter and ex-Gov. A. R. McGill of St. Paul were talked of as candidates against Nelson and both secured some delegates, but both withdrew before the convention met. The convention met in St. Paul, July 28, 1892, with 709 delegates. There was no contest over preliminaries and no contest when it came to nomination for governor. Hon. J. A. Tawney presented Knute Nelson's name and Frank Davis of Minneapolis seconded it. No one else was named and Nelson was nominated by rising vote by acclamation.

The election of Governor Nelson to the United States senate in 1893, promoted Hon. D. M. Clough to the governorship, he being lieutenant governor at the time. Clough served through the remainder of Governor Nelson's term, which was two years lacking one month, and then was a candidate himself before the convention in 1896 for governor. He had considerable opposition the for the nomination, but it did not prove serious, and won on the first ballot by 860 votes, the other candidates receiving as follows:

Van Sant 158

J. L. Gibbs 95

Moses Clapp 30

Gibbs was placated by giving him the lieutenant-governorship after he had been defeated for governor.

S. R. Van Sant

Library of Congress

This was Van Sant's first appearance as a candidate for governor. He was called upon for a speech after Clough was nominated, and, among other things, said:

I feel it an honor to have been mentioned for governor in this convention, but I beg to assure you I was not running for governor. I was only walking.

During the campaign for the nomination Clough encountered strenuous opposition in his own city—Minneapolis. There are more “good” people to the square inch in Minneapolis than any town of its size I ever knew. These “good” people couldn't approve the bluff ways of the rough and ready lumberman, Dave Clough. Led by the Journal, a good deal of opposition was organized. On January 30, 1896, the Journal published under a large headline “Opposed to Clough” this pronunciamento.

“Believing that the best interests of the State of Minnesota and of the Republican party demand that the governor of the state shall be the choice of the people, and shall be selected outside of the political ring which has controlled our state politics for the past eight years, and which now seeks to nominate for that office one of its members;

“We, the undersigned, agree to serve as members of a committee of one hundred to conduct a campaign in Hennepin county to aid in defeating such nomination, and to accomplish that end we will favor the nomination of any good Republican.

“We invite all Republicans who are opposed to the longer continuance of machine rule in the state to join us with the understanding that this movement is not in the interest of any candidate.”

This was followed by the fac-simile signatures of 107 citizens, among whom were W. D. Washburn, W. D. Hale, Geo. A. Pillsbury, E. G. Potter, E. E. Smith, D. F. Morgan, Gustave Thieden, etc.

Library of Congress

Many of the signers were not very prominent in public or political affairs, and the movement apparently fell through by its own size and weight. No full meeting of the committee was 304 ever held. When the state convention met six months later the committee of 100 were a minus quantity, but Hennepin county was there with a solid delegation for Dave Clough.

It was just an ebullition of "goodness" on general principles and proved that virtue does not always have its own reward.

John Lind was the Democratic nominee, and in spite of his great strength among his own nationality, the Swedes, Clough was elected, the vote in the state standing: Clough 165,906, Lind 162,254. Clough not only carried the state, but carried his own county in spite of the one hundred "good" people. His majority was not large, but it was sufficient for all practical purposes.

In 1898 Clough was through with political life, and William H. Eustis, also of Minneapolis, took his place as a candidate for the succession. The Republican convention met on the 30th of June, 1898. There were 1,175 in the convention, and it took two ballots to determine the result. Van Sant loomed up very formidably, and Judge Collins also developed considerable strength. The first ballot stood, Eustis 529, Van Sant 401, Collins 248. The second ballot was, Eustis 555, Van Sant 205, Collins 228. Eustis was introduced to the convention as, the next governor and received with great enthusiasm. Everyone considered his election absolutely sure at that time. After he had made his acceptance speech, Van Sant, who was present, was called upon to respond as one of the defeated candidates, and he did so in a most manly way. I quote what he said as an object lesson. These were his words on that occasion:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention:

Library of Congress

As I sat on the platform listening to the speech of my successful rival, the thought occurred to me that if it seemed "funeral-like" to him while waiting at the Windsor for the result of your deliberations, just imagine my feelings! He won! I lost! I had hoped to return to my home occupying a front seat on the band wagon; instead, I go back in the hearse. Again, imagine my embarrassment! I prepared a speech to deliver to this convention, but alas, it would not be appropriate for this occasion. Besides, I have been for six months talking to the Republicans of Minnesota, and it does not seem to have done much good. Why should I speak more. But, my friends and fellow-workers in the vineyard of the Republican party, I want to say right here and now that from a full heart I thank the four hundred true and tried men who stood 305 by me through thick and thin and to the last, and have only the kindest feeling toward those who opposed my nomination. There was but one trouble—I did not have soldiers enough. Let me assure you that there are no sore spots on me. I most earnestly congratulate Mr. Eustis; he fairly won the nomination. Like him I, too, thought I heard a voice two years ago. I was mistaken. He heard the call; it remains with us to make the election sure. We are all Republicans, but no Republican will carry the flag farther into the enemy's camp during the coming fall than I will unless he have a stronger constitution or greater ability. This will be a Republican year, a glorious year of sunshine; already the warming glow of prosperity is assured. The promise of McKinley and prosperity is a fact, and business conditions are so rapidly and permanently improving that our country is destined soon to become and remain the greatest on the face of the earth.

Again I congratulate you, Mr. Eustis, not only upon your nomination but upon the glorious victory that awaits you in November; and to the end that it may be as nearly unanimous as possible let us all return to our homes and go zealously to work burying our hatchets, if we have any, so deeply that they will never again be resurrected. Personally, I am satisfied, and am ready for the conflict. I have been carefully taking account of my political assets; I find that all I have remaining is my post office address. If you desire my services in the coming campaign all you will have to do is to address me at Winona. I will fight just as hard as a private soldier and in the trenches as if your leader and in command. I believe

Library of Congress

in the grand old party, its success brings prosperity to all the people. No disappointment, however great, can cause me to sulk in my tent; I weigh two hundred pounds, and every ounce of it is for my party and its candidates.

Gentlemen of the convention, in closing let me assure you that there is some compensation even in defeat. I shall go home to family and friends to rest and to quiet, while Mr. Eustis assumes the strenuous duties of campaign and office. The happier man I.

This was as manly an acceptance of defeat as has ever occurred in the state, and I give space to what Governor Van Sant said in this book for the purpose of showing the younger politicians the wise way of accepting their defeats. Do not nurse a common boil and endeavor to enlarge it into a first-class carbuncle. Take for your lesson the manly course of Governor Van Sant on that occasion. A man cannot always win in politics, but if he allows defeat to sour and embitter him, he can always be a sorehead and never again come to the front. It was really Van Sant's speech at the time of his defeat which made him, later, governor of the state. He received at that time 20 306 scores of pledges of support in the future. Pledges are not always honored, but in this case they were. As the result proved, his defeat for the nomination was the greatest victory which could have come to him.

Eustis had for his competitor John Lind, and for the first time in forty years in this state the flag of the Republican party went down to defeat, the vote standing:

Eustis 111,796\

Lind 131,080

Higgins (Prohibitionist) 5,299

Hammond (Socialist) 1,685

Library of Congress

If the two last votes had been added to Eustis' vote, it would not have saved him, as Lind had a majority over all of 12,900.

This defeat of Eustis was not due to his personal unpopularity, though it was partly due to bad management in the campaign. He selected a state central committee composed of able and loyal men, but largely inexperienced in politics, with the result that his campaign was not conducted with as much shrewdness as Republican campaigns usually have been. To make a successful campaign a state central committee must not be over-scrupulous as to their methods. They must simply make up their minds that they are out for votes and follow the advice of the father to his son: Get money if you can; get it honorably if possible, but get money. The shibboleth of the state central committee should be to get all the votes you can; get them honorably as far as possible, but get the votes.

However, it was the Swede nationality which defeated Eustis.

One of the influences which aided in Eustis' defeat was the open and strong opposition of Governor Clough. Governor Clough was not a man who concealed his likes and dislikes, and he demonstrated that his dislike for Eustis was very great. When it was settled that Lind was elected governor, Clough promptly sent him this telegram of congratulations:

Hon. John Lind, New Ulm; allow me to congratulate you from the very bottom of my heart. There is still a God in heaven.

D. M. CLOUGH.

307

Mr. Eustis took his defeat very manfully and he too sent a telegram to his successful rival, but it read different from Clough's. It was thus:

To Hon. John Lind, New Ulm:

Library of Congress

Personal congratulation. May your administration be just and wise and in the highest interests of the state and its people. In the discharge of these exalted duties, you will have my cordial support in everything that makes for the public good.

W. H. EUSTIS.

The defeat of Eustis made the pathway clear for a new deal in 1900. The Republican convention met in St. Paul on June 28th of that year, and then Van Sant was in his element. Scarcely any other candidate was talked of, and when it came to the selection of governor he was nominated by acclamation by a rising vote. His speech of two years previous had not been forgotten. A young man entering politics had better turn back and re-read this speech and take it to heart if he wishes to prosper in a political career. I regard it as a model method of accepting defeat. In the campaign Van Sant had Lind for his competitor, it being the third time Lind was a candidate. He was elected by the narrow margin of 2,254 votes.

Governor Van Sant received the nomination for the second term without any special opposition. This time Mr. Lind refused to be a candidate, and Mr. L. A. Rosing, who had been private secretary to Governor Lind, was substituted by the Democrats as a candidate. The vote at the election stood:

Van Sant 158,878\

Rosing 99,603

The Democrats had made such success with Lind as a candidate that they did not really expect to defeat Van Sant for a second term, and they were neither surprised nor disappointed with the result.

308

OBSERVATION FORTY-FIVE.

Senator Clapp's Election After Senator Davis' Death—Tom Lowry's Campaign.

The death of Senator C. K. Davis, in November, 1900, made it necessary for the legislature to elect two United States senators. Senator Nelson's term was about to expire, and he was, of course, naturally a candidate for re-election, but without opposition. The unexpected vacancy caused by death made things different for the short and unexpired term of Senator Davis. Governor Lind, Democrat, had appointed Charles A. Towne of Duluth, United States senator until such time as the legislature could elect, and Mr. Towne took his seat in December, 1899, pending the coming election.

Hon. Moses E. Clapp was early an avowed candidate for the short term of the vacancy, and was very cordially supported by a large number of the papers in the state. Robert G. Evans of Minneapolis also took the field, and was the leading competitor of Senator Clapp. There were constant rumors of others coming into the field, notably Thomas Lowry, but there was nothing absolutely definite concerning Mr. Lowry until January 11th, after the legislature was in session. He then published the following pronunciamento:

To the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Minnesota:

I hereby announce myself as a candidate for United States senator to succeed the late Cushman K. Davis. Prominent citizens of St. Paul and Minneapolis and other parts of the state before and after the death of Senator Davis, urged me to become a candidate to succeed him. I declined to consider the matter until his death and burial. When this occurred I was in New York, and while there, on December 3, 1900, I received the following telegram from R. G. Evans.

"If you have not already decided concerning the senatorship, I should like to talk with you before you decide."

To this I replied at once:

Library of Congress

"Telegram received on return from Boston. Will see you early next week."

Never having had any conversation with Mr. Evans on the subject, and thinking we were both talked of as candidates, I concluded he desired a conference with me and probably other citizens representing the business interests of our city and state, as to who should be named as the candidate from Minneapolis. I therefore postponed consideration of the matter until my return.

The day of my arrival, Monday, December 10th, I called on Mr. Evans, who assured me he had the pledges of 11 out of 19 Republican members of the Hennepin county delegation to support him as their candidate at a caucus to be held the following evening. Notwithstanding I felt that Mr. Evans had misled me by his telegram and his active work in securing the call for an early caucus during my absence, I told my friends on the delegation I would not go before them as a candidate at that time.

Mr. Evans assured me that none of our congressional delegates would become candidates, and that he had the requisite support to insure his election. I told him I would not exert myself in his behalf. I also said to him that if at any time it seemed to me and my friends that he could not succeed I should feel at liberty to take such action as seemed best.

From a careful review of the situation, I am convinced Mr. Evans cannot be elected. In this I may be mistaken; but believing it, and being assured by many members and by various sources that I would be acceptable in the interests of Minnesota, I offer myself as a candidate.

THOMAS LOWRY.

Minneapolis, January 11, 1901.

Library of Congress

The same day Tams Bixby came out as a candidate, and very shortly thereafter Congressman James A. Tawney of Winona shied his caster into the ring.

It always seemed to me that Mr. Lowry made a serious and almost fatal mistake when he received Mr. Evans' original telegram, that he did not promptly respond by stating that he was a candidate, and also making the announcement through the newspapers. It is no disgrace or discredit to a man to be a candidate for the United States senate; and, while this may not always be the rule, in my judgment it is the best way in politics in the end to be open and above board. It is true that Mr. Lowry was a good ways from home, and did not absolutely know the local situation. But he knew he wanted to be a candidate, and if he had promptly declared himself he might have stood a better show. Of course, the candidacy of Mr. Lowry really settled it that Senator Clapp would be the winner, because the old rule of "a house divided against itself must surely fall" has not yet been abrogated, and the division by Minneapolis having two candidates, rendered it practically certain in advance that both would be defeated. There was great confusion and commotion in the Evans ranks over Mr. Lowry's announcement.

Mr. Lowry opened liberal headquarters at the Windsor Hotel, St. Paul, and the business men of Minneapolis rallied quite loyally to his support. During the short time intervening before the caucus they came down by the score every day to demonstrate that Minneapolis was not all for Evans. The hotel lobbies, and all places where politicians do congregate, were swarming with Mr. Lowry's friends from Minneapolis. But unfortunately for him they had no votes in the legislature, and the large majority of the Hennepin county delegation in the legislature were already pledged to Evans. The first caucus was duly held on the evening of the 14th of January. The first ballot stood Clapp 44, Evans 53, Tawney 27, Bixby 11, Lowry 3, McCleary 1, Jepson 1. Fourteen ballots were taken that evening, the caucus lasting till after midnight, amid great excitement. There was very little change from the original ballot, especially with the leading candidates. Clapp gained three during the ballots, and closed with 47. Evans gained one, coming up to 54, but

Library of Congress

finally lost two, and closed with 52. The last ballot stood Clapp 47, Evans 52, Tawney 29, Bixby 6, Lowry 3, McCleary 3. Lowry had held his strength solid. After a good deal of contention it was decided to adjourn, this being Friday night, and hold another caucus at 2: 30 Saturday afternoon. During the remainder of the night and all Saturday forenoon nothing was thought of or talked of in the legislature, on the streets, or in the hotels, except the senatorship. There were 140 Republicans in the legislature, and at the Saturday 311 afternoon caucus the roll call showed 138 present. A carefully concerted plot had been formed by the Evans men to create a stampede from Tawney to Evans and thus secure him the nomination. Tawney had been induced to notify his friends that he would release them from further support, and this aided the scheme. When the roll had been called in that Saturday afternoon caucus the attempted stampede movement was sprung. Senator Lord of Dodge arose and made a neat speech, concluding with the announcement that he wished to change from Tawney to Evans. Senator Thompson of Fillmore followed with a similar change, and Senator Knatvold of Freeborn county followed with a similar announcement. These were three of the leading senators in the legislature, and when to their changes were added Representatives Anderson and Burns, making five in all, it looked as if the stampede might be successful. The excitement was something absolutely intense, so intense that the caucus was really quiet. But during that quietude the Clapp men began to get their second wind, and then breaks from Tawney to Clapp began. One or two dropped into the Clapp band wagon from Bixby, and in a very few minutes the thing was all over. As soon as the failure to stampede for Evans became apparent, the stampede for Clapp became more intense, and, while the roll had been originally called and the ballot stood almost exactly the same as the last ballot on the previous night, that ballot was never announced. The band wagon was in motion, and the members of the caucus could not get on board too fast. Speaker Dowling was presiding. It required 71 to nominate. He had been voting for McCleary, Jepson and others merely to scatter his vote, but he kept close watch of the result as figured by the tellers, with instructions to notify him when Clapp's vote had reached 70. This happened very soon after the failure of the attempted stampede for Evans, and when Clapp had 70 recorded votes by the changes on

Library of Congress

the tellers' sheets, Speaker Dowling arose and announced that he wished to change his vote to Clapp. That gave the necessary 71, and then pandemonium broke out. Everything was all over but the fun. Books and papers went flying in the air, and men embraced each other, shook hands, shouted, jumped on chairs and desks, and yelled like a pack of 312 Indians on a massacre trip. Amid all the hubub Sherman Smith, one of the leaders of the Evans Minneapolis forces, after repeated efforts, caught the attention of the chair and moved to make Senator Clapp's nomination unanimous. While this joyful ebullition was in progress I was seated at the reporters' table and scribbled off the following little verse:

Moses, Moses, We are all for Moses; Out they go, in he goes, On a bed of roses.

By the aid of the other reporters we scribbled off 25 or 30 copies of this little ditty and circulated them among the members. I took one to Albert Berg, who has a voice like a bull of Bashan (in fact he had to pay excess baggage on his voice to bring it down to the legislature), and is something of a singer withal, and requested him to lead in the exercises. I also went to Speaker Dowling and asked him to call upon Berg to sing the verse. It was a parody on the "Baby" song in "Wang," and set to the music of one of the most catchy airs in that comic opera. Dowling duly did his part by calling upon Berg to sing. He essayed to do so, but didn't catch the air very well, and it was not a success.

Dowling then insisted that I should lead the exercises myself, and when I demurred, with my characteristic modesty, he ordered the sergeant-at-arms to arrest me and bring me to the bar of the house. Of course, I complied, and did my part as well as I could by leading the vocal exercises for 10 or 15 minutes. Perhaps the only reason I escaped being mobbed for attempting to sing was because the audience knew that I was acting under duress. So I feel under lasting obligations to Speaker Dowling for having me formally arrested. There was nothing very brilliant or original in this little episode, though it was somewhat amusing.

Library of Congress

At the national convention in Chicago, in 1892, which nominated Grover Cleveland for president, Samuel Josephs was a 313 member of the Philadelphia delegation. He was a little sawed-off, rotund, fat, rosy-cheeked representative of Jerusalem, and he, too, parodied the “Baby” song in “Wang.” His verse ran as follows:

Grover, Grover, Four years more of Grover; Out they go, in he goes, Then we'll be in clover.

The convention took up his little ditty, much as the caucus did, though on a great deal larger scale. The Philadelphia delegation would pick Josephs up, and, after throwing him up in the air three or four times, place him on a chair, give the signal to the band to start the music, and Josephs would lead again and again in singing the verse. After this began it was repeated continually throughout the convention whenever there was a lull. The next day after the matter originated, Josephs had thousands of the verse printed, so that everybody in the convention had a copy; and that convention and audience, 10,000 strong, would rise up, with a yell which almost lifted the roof, and sing this verse. So that I neither claim wit nor originality for sitting at Josephs' feet as a pupil.

After the election poor Josephs became a candidate for collector of the port of Philadelphia. He seemed to have splendid endorsements, and devoted months and months to the pursuit of the office. He felt that he had sung himself into a fat berth, and was exceedingly confident of success. But he never got into the “clover.” Grover, evidently, had no music in his soul, and persistently refused to appoint Josephs to that or any other position, and at last the poor man died absolutely and literally of a broken heart at the base ingratitude of politics. His death was a political tragedy.

In further emulation of my Chicago prototype, when the absolute election of Senator Clapp took place in the legislature the following Tuesday, I had several hundred copies of my little verse printed, and hired an orchestra, placing them in the gallery, with instructions to start the air on a signal from myself. 314 When Senator Clapp had been declared duly

Library of Congress

elected in the joint convention, I modestly took the speaker's chair, and, seizing the gavel as a wand, gave the signal to the orchestra, and away we went with the musical program. Everybody in the hall of representatives had a printed copy of the verse, and everybody apparently, members of the legislature, audience and all, joined in the singing, so that the event was quite a success. While the committee were out to find Senator Clapp to bring him in to make his acceptance speech the singing was continued. It was suspended when Senator Clapp arrived long enough to allow him to speak, when I again gave the signal to the orchestra and started the uproar. Senator Clapp held a half-hour reception at the foot of the speaker's desk, during which time the singing was continuous. It has sometimes been a question in my mind which was the greater event on that particular day—the election of Senator Clapp or the singing of “Moses.” While it was a nonsensical affair throughout, it literally impressed the public with the idea that “Moses” was landed on a bed of roses, and when a man reaches that stage in political life he has about arrived at the limit.

The actual vote in the respective houses for senator stood: In the senate, Clapp 43, Towne 17; in the house, Clapp 92, Towne 21. The rest was a mere matter of form, reading the journal of each house in the joint convention the following day, January 23d, and it was duly recorded that Hon. Moses E. Clapp was elected senator to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator C. K. Davis. The vote for Senator Nelson's successor was taken and recorded at the same time. The Democrats had nominated Hon. R. R. Nelson, formerly United States district judge, as their candidate, and the vote in the senate stood: Knute Nelson 42, Judge Nelson 18; in the; house, Knute Nelson 94, Judge Nelson 22.

There was no caucus to nominate Knute Nelson, as he had no opposition whatever, and he, too, was “on a bed of roses” without having gone through the hubbub and excitement which had befallen Senator Clapp. As soon as Senator Clapp's certificate 315 could be made out he proceeded to Washington and took his seat at once, relegating the pro tem Senator Towne to the ranks of private life.

Library of Congress

The three votes for Mr. Lowry were cast by Henry Lee of Anoka, Frank S. Lane and J. W. Phillips of Minneapolis. It was reported at the time, and believed by many, that Mr. Lowry had in reserve about 40 votes, but the only ones that came out from under cover were the three named, and he was the only man who held his strength from first to last. They voted for him just to keep his name in the caucus. The fact is, Mr. Lowry was in that caucus in practically the position of the heathen Chinees Ah Sin (so graphically described by Bret Harte), who, in playing a game of cards which he did not understand, had all high cards up his sleeve, and, when he finally shook out his sleeve, his competitors in the game were profoundly disgusted and went for that heathen Chinees in rough-shod style. The difference was that "Tom" never shook his sleeve. He was further handicapped by being a wealthy man. While perhaps it is not creditable to the politics of the present day to say, but it is, unfortunately, the truth that when a wealthy man goes into politics he is expected to pay for all he gets, and Tom Lowry is such a royal good fellow that it would be almost a libel to assume that out of that large body of men he only had three friends. But others were really afraid to declare themselves for him lest they should place themselves under suspicion. As a matter of fact, Tom Lowry would make a most excellent United States senator. I do not assume that he would rank up beside such men as Senator Hoar and others of his class, or with those dead statesmen senators, Sumner, Webster and Conkling, but with such class of statesmen as Steve Elkins, Matt Quay and Arthur Pue Gorman, Tom would be a whirlwind. He is a man of the world and understands the world pretty thoroughly, and the world runs the United States senate as it does most everything else. I would rather rely upon a senator who is a man of the world to accomplish things than one who is a theorist and orator. So if he had reached the senate and taken time enough from cutting off his coupons to mingle with his fellow senators he would have been a very popular member, and anything within reason that Tom Lowry wanted for his constituency he would probably get. I merely say this in passing, because it seems too bad that a man like Mr. Lowry should be relegated to history with only three men on earth who think he is fit to go to the United States senate.

R. C. Dunn

317

OBSERVATION FORTY-SIX.

The Great Gubernatorial Contest of 1904.

On the 5th of November, 1903, Governor Van Sant gave an interview to the evening papers, the excuse for which was the November elections which had just taken place. He gave his interview, however, an especially local application. After commenting upon the elections in the East, this convenient question was asked him:

Will the contest in Minnesota over the make-up of the state ticket have any relation to the presidential contest?

To this he replied:

I think it will. It is a little early to discuss state politics, but one thing should be demanded by the people of Minnesota who are for Roosevelt, and that is that the next governor should be a man who was and is in sympathy with the Republican state platform of 1902 in its declaration for the enforcement of the law against the "merger" or parallel and competing railway lines. No man who was not in accord with the people during the last state campaign should have the assurance to aspire to the governorship. The anti-merger fight involves the welfare of the state, and men who have expressed sympathy for those who organized the "merger" and who have attempted at crucial times to ridicule the state officers in their endeavor to enforce the law, should not now be placed in a position where they might connive at violations of the law and be helpful in undoing that which has already been accomplished. This fight has been waged in the interests of our people, and will be continued until the law has been vindicated and every interest thoroughly safe-guarded. All the ingenuity and skill of able counsel will be employed to maintain the "merger" in some form and to carry out in some manner the purposes of its organization. Our nominee

Library of Congress

should not be on the defensive and required to explain. Promises and explanations made necessary by one's candidacy, and which are inconsistent with former words and actions will not suffice. No man who desires the domination of interests inimical to the people and who has not stood 318 squarely upon the anti-merger platform should ask under existing conditions elevation to this responsible office, and to prevent the nomination of such a man a most determined effort should be made.

With Theodore Roosevelt, who has been pronounced against the merger, as our standard-bearer, what predicament would our party be in if it nominated a merger sympathizer for governor?

There are various methods of construing the English language, and consequently I take the liberty in this volume to place my construction upon the interview which I have just quoted. It was a formal and carefully prepared interview, and, to my mind, bore the impress from start to finish that there was just one man in the State of Minnesota who filled the description, and that his name was Samuel R. Van Sant. He had been the head and front of the anti-merger fight, had inaugurated it in the first place, and in every way had been in the foreground. Here was an interview stating that the contest should be continued, and no one should be nominated for Governor who had not been in the fight against the "merger."

I invite the most critical person to analyze this interview and show any sentence, any paragraph, or any word which could be tortured into a declination of Governor Van Sant to be a candidate for a third term as Governor. I am not at all tenacious of my own views and give them merely for what they are worth to the intelligent reader, and illustrate the different constructions which can be placed upon the English language by stating that Judge L. W. Collins, in November, saw in Governor Van Sant's interview a strong and formal announcement that he would not again be a candidate for Governor. Just five days after Governor Van Sant's interview was made public, Judge Collins made an announcement in his home papers at St. Cloud, explaining that in view of Governor Van

Library of Congress

Sant's declaration he was a candidate for Governor. Here is the statement which Judge Collins published:

It has been well known that for several years I have aspired to the position of governor in this state, to which I came in its territorial days, and wherein I have lived for nearly 50 years. My friends say that the time to announce and open an active candidacy has arrived.

319

My personal relations with Governor Van Sant and my convictions that his earnest effort to prevent what his legal adviser, the attorney general, pronounced a violation of our statutes, should be sustained by every conscientious citizen, have prevented the taking of any steps by me looking towards the nomination while the governor felt disposed to again become a candidate.

I do not regard the recently published interview in which he announced his position as indicating that he is in the field; on the contrary, I construe it as indicative of his determination to keep out and to be considered a possibility no longer.

He is absent from the state, but I know that many of his friends put the same construction upon the interview and assert that if he proposed becoming a candidate he would have said so in no uncertain way.

With this condition presenting itself I announce my candidacy, and solicit the support of all Republicans who believe in and propose to stand by the platform presented in 1902 and on which the party gained its magnificent and unequalled victory.

My record is before the people of the state, and I hope still receives their approval as it has on past occasions when before them for endorsement.

This shows the different constructions which can be placed upon language by different persons.

Library of Congress

Judge Collins had twice been a candidate in Republican state conventions for the office of Governor, and his desire for the position was no secret. It always seemed to me that his assumption that Governor Van Sant had declined was forced, and that the haste with which he accepted the interview with Van Sant as a declination, while the Governor was absent from the state, indicated a fear that when the Governor should be asked to place his own interpretation on the interview, he would blossom out as a full-fledged candidate for the third term. Per contra, it is only fair to say that Judge Jamison, Governor Van Sant's private secretary, stated to Collins very plainly that the Governor was not a candidate for re-nomination; and the Governor himself has told me, in discussing the point I have raised, since I began writing this book, that he really did not intend to be a candidate for the third term. In reply to that I have only to say that whatever the Governor's actual intentions were, he certainly did not decline the nomination in the interview which I have quoted; and it is altogether probable, if there had been any appearance of a popular uprising in his behalf, he would have been willing to make the race.

With Judge Collins' interview the campaign of 1904 within the Republican party began to formulate itself. Ex-State Auditor R. C. Dunn, had really been a candidate for Governor for several years. He was so coy that he scarcely admitted it to himself—unless he was alone. But it was, nevertheless, known to his friends that that was his ambition. He was much talked of as a candidate when Governor Van Sant was nominated for the second term, but firmly refused to enter the field against Van Sant. It has been alleged—but I do not vouch for it—that there was an understanding that if he would not enter the field against Van Sant in 1902 he would have the field and Van Sant's support in 1904. This may or may not be true. But stranger things in politics than that have happened.

Of course after Judge Collins' interview came out, announcing his candidacy, Mr. Dunn was eagerly sought by the reporters. Probably no man lives who talks more freely, plumply and energetically than Bob Dunn, but he has one characteristic: he does not talk until he gets ready. The consequence was that he parried the efforts of the reporters

Library of Congress

to get an interview formally announcing his candidacy, and in talking with friends would couple the possibilities of the future by some qualifying statement such as, "If I should take the field for Governor," etc. I heard him make such a qualification many times, and I well understood all of the time that he was a full-fledged candidate all but saying so officially. When he got ready, however, to make the announcement he did so in his own way. But it was the middle of January before he did so, and then made use of his own newspaper at Princeton, Minn., Jan, 12, 1904, the occasion being a reception tendered him at his home in the Opera house. His announcement to his friends at that time was as follows:

I am a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor of Minnesota and I respectfully solicit the support of all Republicans, and my fellow citizens generally.

321

No man is big enough to dictate a platform for the Republican party of Minnesota. The party through its representatives in convention assembled will formulate a platform upon which I will squarely stand. The combined wisdom of the Republican party of the state is better than the judgment of any individual member of the party.

I heartily indorse and approve the platform adopted by the Republican state convention of 1902.

There are certain other things which I believe in and will practice, advocate and recommend if I am chosen governor.

The state board of control should be absolutely divorced from politics and the affairs of the board should be conducted on business principles, on broad gauge lines, with due regard to humanitarian features; no niggardly policy should be pursued.

One of my cardinal beliefs is non-interference of the executive with the legislative branch of the government, and the appointive officers should eschew politics and devote their

Library of Congress

energies to the performance of their official duties. Those who serve the state best will serve me best.

The state should make liberal provisions for the reclamation of its swamp lands.

I pledge myself to observe and enforce the law which gives to ex-Union soldiers the preference to appointive offices.

I pledge myself to a fearless and impartial enforcement of the laws, upon our statute books, particularly those which guard the interests of the people from the encroachments of corporate greed and aggression. Every citizen is equal under the law and should enjoy equal privileges and equally share the burdens.

In conclusion, I think my record in the legislature and in the state auditor's office, which is an open book, should be a guarantee that I will discharge the duties of the office of governor in an intelligent and business-like manner. If nominated and elected I pledge myself to devote my entire time and attention to the faithful performance of the duties of the position.

It will be noted that Dunn, as well as Collins, announced that he, too, supported the Republican state platform of 1902. This platform especially insisted on the "merger" fight being continued. Consequently, on the face of things there was the utmost harmony between the two candidates, and the practical situation was that the only real local issue in Minnesota this fall was "merger" and "anti-merger," and that both Dunn and Collins were red-hot anti-mergerites.

To a person not versed in the science of politics this would seem to make a situation where there was not much to fight about, both candidates standing pledged to the same principles. 21 322 Nevertheless, the most bitter political and personal controversy which the state has ever seen sprang up. The entire ground for this controversy was the "merger" question, which, on the face of it, had no business to be even mentioned as long as the

Library of Congress

candidates were entirely agreed upon it. The Collins men took as their stock in trade the statement that Dunn was in favor of the “merger” of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern railways. The Dunn men not only denied this, but declared that Judge Collins had always been, on the bench, practically a representative of the Great Northern, and that the president of the road had contributed largely to Judge Collins' election in 1894.

To show something of how this feeling ran, I quote the following statement made by Mr. Dunn in a speech in Minneapolis on May 6th:

I have it upon the authority of James J. Hill that when Judge Collins was running against Judge Willis for the supreme bench, the Great Northern railway contributed between \$30,000 and \$40,000 to his campaign fund; and I have it on the same authority that E. A. Nelson, state librarian, went to the Great Northern railway to get \$25,000 for Judge Collins in the present campaign. I will withdraw from the gubernatorial campaign right now if it can be proved that the Great Northern has been asked or that money has been given by the road for me in this campaign.

Considering that the two candidates were both pledged to fight the Great Northern road, this speech indicated that things were getting a little warm. Judge Collins kept his end of the fight up by sending the following letter to Mr. Dunn, referring to the Minneapolis speech:

Did you use this language, or any other of like import? If you are correctly reported you accuse Mr. Hill, as well as myself, of very serious offences. You placed him in the attitude of furnishing funds to corrupt the voters of this state, a common boodler, and I am accused of soliciting a large sum of money from Mr. Hill for the purpose of corrupting and boodling the voters. I simply want to know if you used this or similar language. An early and direct reply is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully yours, L. W. COLLINS.

Library of Congress

Mr. Dunn never made any formal reply by letter to Judge Collins' letter. In interviews with the newspapers he reiterated 323 that he had been correctly reported, and that he did say what was alleged. Judge Collins, however, was not content with this, and he appealed to Mr. Hill for confirmation or denial. The result was that on Friday, May 13, Judge Collins gave out this statement to the newspapers:

JUDGE COLLINS' STATEMENT.

During my residence of fifty years in Minnesota, never before have I been called upon to publicly resent an attack upon my personal character. I cannot allow the recent attack of Mr. Dunn to go unnoticed. He has a right to his own views upon public questions, and he may choose his political associates, but he has no right to defame others who differ with him and his friends upon these questions. I judge him from his own language and acts.

In the Pioneer Press of January 3, 1902, he is quoted as saying, concerning the railroad merger, then the subject of heated discussion in this state:

"I believe that the fight against Mr. Hill is inspired by rival railway companies, and I am heartily out of sympathy with it because of this belief."

Mr. Dunn has never announced a change of mind upon this subject.

In fact, a short time since he caused this interview to be republished, with a statement that he stood by it, and in his interview with Mr. Hill, published in the Dispatch of the 7th inst., the latter, speaking of the present campaign, assured Mr. Dunn that he had his (Mr. Hill's) best wishes, and also that the figures to be obtained at the office "might help Bob." Because many persons, including myself, have recognized and seen fit to refer to this well known relationship and intimacy between these gentlemen, which intimacy and exchange of sympathy Mr. Dunn now publicly admits, he found provocation in a speech at Minneapolis on May 6, to charge "calmly and deliberately" that in 1894, when a candidate for re-election to the supreme bench, I "solicited and secured the support of James J. Hill

Library of Congress

to the extent of a contribution of from \$30,000 to \$40,000” to my campaign fund. This was a direct charge that I had solicited from Mr. Hill the large sum of money mentioned for my personal use. In a letter dated May 7, I asked Mr. Dunn if he had used this language, but to this letter I have received no reply, and I note from statements in the public press that none will be made. Knowing the utter falsity of this charge, and believing that Mr. Hill would refuse to father it, I wrote to him, asking the following questions:

First—Did you contribute any sum whatsoever to my campaign fund when I was a candidate against the Hon. John Willis, or have you ever contributed to that fund in any other campaign? If so, when, where, how much and to whom was the money paid?

324

Second—Did I ever solicit or receive from you, or from anyone connected with you in business or otherwise, any money whatsoever for campaign purposes? If so when, where, how much, and to whom was the money paid? Omitting the address, Mr. Hill's reply was as follows:

“Dear Sir: Your letter of even date was duly received. As the same is rather ambiguous I would like to hear from you further as to how far you wish me to go into details in connection with the matter referred to herein. Yours very truly, “JAMES J. HILL.”

I did not regard my letter as ambiguous, but, waiving the point, I immediately replied as follows:

“Hon. James J. Hill, city, Dear Sir—Referring to the letters which have recently passed between us, let me say that Mr. Dunn explicitly charged in his speech, if correctly reported, that I solicited and received from you between \$30,000 and \$40,000 in the campaign of 1894. But one construction can be placed on this language and but one meaning can be attributed to it, which is, that at the time mentioned, I solicited from you and that you furnished to me for my own private and individual use in that campaign the large sum of money mentioned. It was this construction and meaning I had in mind when writing my

Library of Congress

former letter, and I therefore ask you, first: Did I solicit from you any contributions of money in the campaign of 1894, or any other campaign? If so, when, where and how much.

“Second—Did you contribute to me personally or for my personal use any money in 1894, or at any other time for campaign purposes? If so, when, where, how much and to whom was the money paid? These questions are as pointed and direct as words can make them, and I respectfully solicit an early reply. Respectfully yours, “L. W. COLLINS.”

Mr. Hill's second reply. To this I received the following reply:

“Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your letter of the 10th inst., and if you desire a personal interview on the subject of the letter I expect to be at home all of this week and will see you at my office any time you desire.

“No contribution was personally solicited by you or made to you by me.

“By whom contributions were solicited and to whom made is a proper subject for a personal interview rather than of correspondence.

Yours truly, “JAMES J. HILL.

After submitting the above correspondence I leave it to any fairminded man to judge of Mr. Dunn's candor and fairness of statement when making that charge.

325

Referring now to Mr. Hill's invitation to a personal interview as to contributions made by him in the campaign of 1894, let me say that I have no desire to ascertain about contributions unless they were made upon my solicitation or suggestion. If Mr. Hill's letters referred to contributions made by him to the Republican state central committee it will be seen that they have no bearing upon the charge made by Mr. Dunn. In this event, it must be presumed that the committee used its funds for the benefit of the entire ticket, including

Library of Congress

Mr. Dunn, who was a candidate for state auditor, and Hon. J. P. Heatwole, a candidate for member of Congress.

I now state without equivocation, or reservation, that I never suggested, and never requested, directly or indirectly, that money be solicited or secured from Mr. Hill for that campaign, or for the present contest, or for any other.

If such solicitation has been made it has been done without my knowledge, authority or consent, and twice have I unsuccessfully endeavored to ascertain who did this soliciting, or secured the money—if anybody. I want the names of these parties published to the world in a letter from Mr. Hill, and then let the public judge whether or not I countenanced or authorized their acts.

I have carefully refrained from making any attack on the character of Mr. Dunn, or any other candidate, and cannot be justly accused of any mud-slinging whatsoever, but a candidate's record, political associates, and attitude on public questions are fit subjects for discussion in a contest like the present one.

I have not hesitated to say that the Republican party in this state has been one of principle. In 1902 it took an unequivocal position on the merger question, and with a clear voice indorsed the action of President Roosevelt and Governor Van Sant in bringing into the courts the Northern Securities company to answer to the charge that it was guilty of a flagrant violation of both the state and federal statutes. The charge that it had violated the federal law stands substantiated. I believe that the party meant precisely what it said upon this subject, and that it was not trifling with the people at that time. I believe that it will not, at the coming convention, repudiate its platform or stultify itself when nominating its candidate for governor. If it does, its indorsement of President Roosevelt and Governor Van Sant was mere ceremony to be disavowed at the first opportunity if demanded by the candidate. The issue now before the party is not whether one of two or more men shall be selected, but shall the party be consistent, or shall it go into the campaign with a

Library of Congress

repudiation of the doctrine upon which it appealed to the people in 1902, and which was upheld by the majority for Van Sant of more than 60,000?

Those who have taken any interest in this subject cannot have reached any other conclusion than that the fight against these interests has just commenced. Not only Minnesota but the entire country is 326 involved in a great struggle to determine whether such interests shall be subservient to law. Our party will certainly take a decided stand upon this subject, and an aspirant for the highest office in the gift of the people who has openly declared himself out of sympathy with the party on this important public question ought not to complain if he is criticised.

L. W. COLLINS.

The same date Mr. Nelson, the librarian, published a card explaining his interview with Mr. Hill and denying very emphatically that he solicited money for the Collins campaign.

I give space to these statements as a matter of history for the double purpose of showing the trend of the most notable ante-nomination campaign in the history of the state, and also to show how good men, who start on the same platform, pledging themselves to the same things, can get at variance under the stress of political strife. It is not my purpose to express any opinion of my own upon the charge made by Mr. Dunn, and its refutation by Judge Collins. The public has sufficient intelligence to draw its own conclusions. I sometimes wonder, however, what Minnesota politicians would have for a bone of contention if J. J. Hill had never been born.

Another element of accusation against Mr. Dunn was that he had been too lenient while State Auditor in settling with big lumbermen for trespassing upon state timber; and the public examiner worked overtime during the campaign to find out something which would reflect upon Mr. Dunn. Mr. Dunn replied very vigorously and in no uncertain language to

Library of Congress

these accusations; and as they are largely devoted to assertions and counter assertions it is not necessary to refer to them in detail.

But as the date of the state convention approached the partisans of these respective candidates grew more keenly bitter, and it is safe to say that no such bitter feeling has ever been developed between the Democrats and Republicans in Minnesota as among the Republicans themselves during this ante-nomination gubernatorial canvass of 1904.

When the Supreme Court, the highest tribunal in the land, decided against the "merger" by a vote of five to four and three-quarters the Dunn men claimed the merger fight was 327 over and taken out of politics, while the Collins men claimed that it had only just begun. It would not do to lose their stock in trade in the middle of the canvass.

When the county conventions began to be held the air was full of vociferous claims on both sides. Honors were easy in the matter of these claims. I would not like to say that men intentionally lied relative to primary meetings and county conventions in their reports of who had won the victories; but I think it is fair to say that they shunned telling the truth with as great an effort as they would in avoiding a den of rattlesnakes. But truth and politics never did mix well together, so that the truthful man had better engage in the ministry rather than participate in politics.

When the state convention assembled on June 30th there was a great deal of excitement to the square inch in St. Paul. The convention itself was one of the tamest affairs I ever saw. An exciting canvass had just been concluded. Everybody was mad, hopeful, and certain that his side would win, and that all the rest of the fellows were scoundrels who did not believe as he did. There was no middle ground, though Ex-Congressman Frank Eddy offered himself as a vicarious sacrifice if anybody wanted any middle ground. But the feeling was that it was Dunn, Collins, or a funeral. The hotel corridors and the adjacent bar-rooms were packed with an excited mass of humanity, all acting as if their personal eternal salvation depended upon the nomination of the candidate they individually

Library of Congress

championed. The candidates had headquarters at all the hotels, which were thronged with their partisans at all hours of the day and night. Halls were hired and public meetings were held every evening, at which vociferous speeches were made in favor of the candidate who was paying for the hall. Amidst all this the convention itself was almost as quiet as a religious service; certainly as quiet as a camp-meeting when the deacons are taking an outing.

The evening before the convention, the State Central Committee which had 17 Collins men out of 29, met at the Windsor hotel. They decided that they would issue badges of admission to the main floor of the Opera House to those having 328 credentials correct on their face, and tickets of admission to the galleries for the contestants.

The delegates and contestants were swarming about the committee headquarters to secure their badges and tickets, so that before the committee adjourned it was about midnight. Word was brought to Judge Jamison, the chairman of the committee, that there was a large crowd up at the Governor's office, and he was invited to come up. Governor Van Sant was also at the hotel, and the Judge and the Governor walked up to the capitol, where they found about 100 excited men. They had been talking over the situation with a view of getting a ruling from the State Central Committee, which would have produced the split in the party which they really at heart desired. When the Judge and the Governor arrived, several incendiary speeches were made, the purport of which was that they asked the State Central Committee to make up a roll of the convention which should be considered as final and determining who should hold seats in the convention. The precedent at the Chicago National Convention was cited to affirm this. The plan was to have Judge Jamison call the convention to order and recognize a certain man who would offer a resolution to that effect to be voted on in the convention. Of course, Judge Jamison would have been expected to declare the resolution adopted no matter how the vote stood. In the meantime the committee was to have the roll all prepared, admitting the Collins delegates from Hennepin and Ramsey counties and all the other contested counties to permanent seats in the convention. After the speeches had been made and the

Library of Congress

proposed resolution read, Judge Jamison arose and stated that some weeks previously the State Central Committee had unanimously decided to invite Senator Clapp to preside and he had courteously accepted and prepared a speech designed to be the opening of the campaign. He thought it would be a matter of discourtesy to the Senator for him to assume to take the convention out of his hands, and that his duty would be discharged when he called the convention to order and turned it over to Senator Clapp, to meet this or any other emergencies which might arise. Judge Jamison's pacificatory speech had no effect upon that excited 329 mob. Other speeches were made advocating the proposed resolution, and finally someone moved that the resolution be adopted, and the entire crowd voted unanimously that that should be the course of procedure. The vote was taken about 1 a. m. If the motion had been that there should be two conventions and two candidates for Governor put in the field by the Republican party, it could not have been more direct. It is to the credit of Judge Jamison that when his crisis arose he displayed more firmness and fairness than I supposed he possessed, as he was a supporter of Collins himself. He simply and absolutely declined to carry out this incendiary program; and the fact that the party now presents an apparently united front, with a sore flank, is due to his decision at that critical time on the memorable night before the meeting of the convention. The Judge declined to be a party to self-stultification, and made a decision which probably the majority of those who voted for the incendiary resolution will live to thank him for. And still the machinery through the majority of the State Central Committee was in the hands of the Collins forces, and it is not often that it has been surrendered as a matter of policy. Those who were present at the convention will recall that Senator Clapp repeatedly mentioned that there was no temporary, or other, roll of the convention, and he could not, therefore, determine who were members of the convention in order to appoint certain committees. If there had been even a temporary roll this history of the affair would have read a good deal different.

The Collins men were evidently fearful of their strength, and the usual political tactics, which have been so frequently described in these pages, were evidently desired to be

Library of Congress

resorted to, of making a split in the convention and two candidates for Governor. I assume, because I consider it fair to do so, that in urging this action the Collins men knew that they were in the minority. I only absolutely know that they did urge such action, and I read their minds as the result of their making such demands. While I do not think any injustice is done them by this assumption of mine, I feel that I can fairly claim that the presumption and conclusion I have 330 drawn has a logical basis to rest upon from the action which they urged.

I by no means censure or criticise the Collins men for their demands. They were simply apt pupils in the school of practical politics. They controlled the machine and wanted to use it. The Dunn men would have done the same if their positions had been reversed. When you are in a position where you cannot do it, it is always safe to denounce the other fellow for doing something you would like to do if you had the power.

The convention assembled in the Metropolitan Opera House during the forenoon of June 30, 1904. There was a large police force and numerous sergeants-at-arms appointed by the State Central Committee, on hand to preserve order and inspect tickets and badges presented at the door. Senator Moses E. Clapp had been selected by common consent as the temporary presiding officer. Senator Clapp had been careful not to openly commit himself to either faction, though it was generally understood that he favored Collins for Governor. Still, owing to his high position and the feeling that he would be fair in his rulings (as he was soon to be a candidate for re-election) both sides felt that he was the safest man to select, and one who could be trusted.

It would have been almost fatal to have had a contest for the temporary chairmanship thrust upon the convention at the outset, in its heated mercurial state.

The calling of the convention to order by Senator Clapp was delayed a considerable length of time by a conference upon the platform, at which I was present simply by the accident of location, and consequently heard the conference without any intention of intruding or being

Library of Congress

a party thereto. Messrs. W. H. Grimshaw, U. S. Marshal, and Hon. R. B. Brower, of St. Cloud, represented the Collins forces in the conference, and W. G. Anderson, of Winona, who had been chosen as the Dunn leader upon the floor, represented the Dunn faction. Grimshaw was absolutely incendiary in his demands upon Senator Clapp. He talked along the lines of the midnight resolution passed in Governor Van Sant's chambers the night before. He demanded full recognition of the Hennepin delegation 331 which had been allowed seats upon the floor, and the utter ignoring of the contestants. He denounced the contestants as bolters, not entitled to recognition in any way whatever. Senator Clapp refused to comply with Mr. Grimshaw's request, as Judge Jamison had, and finally turning to the representatives of the factions, said: "You gentlemen must agree among yourselves, and when you do I will decide what I will do." Senator Clapp had previously suggested several plans, one of which was to have an agreement as to the makeup of the credentials committee, but this the representatives of the candidates at first declined to consider. Mr. Brower said but little, and was not especially insistent, but Grimshaw was aggressive, and open in his demands, while Anderson was quiet and resolute in refusing to accede to any of Grimshaw's requests, though he favored Senator Clapp's plan of an agreement upon the make-up of the committee on credentials, as that committee would hold the key to the situation.

The 1175 delegates gathered were mere puppets to be moved by the machinery of the managers. An agreement was finally reached upon the basis of Senator Clapp's suggestion, and Grimshaw reluctantly assented because he could not help himself. Senator Clapp had told him in plain terms that he proposed to rule absolutely fairly in presiding over the convention.

While this delay was going on the convention was restless, but was finally called to order by Judge Jamison, and the temporary chairman named, as having been selected by the State Central Committee. Before any active business was attempted the temporary chairman made what was designed to be the opening speech of the campaign. The speech was somewhat lengthy, and during the time of its delivery the delegates who

Library of Congress

were ill-natured had time to think a little; so that when it came to the appointment of the committee on credentials the expected disturbance did not occur.

The arrangement finally settled upon was that seven men selected by the Collins leaders and seven by the Dunn leaders, with one from the supporters of Eddy, should compose a committee on credentials. The names agreed upon by each faction 332 were handed to Senator Clapp. This made a committee of 15. The representative of Mr. Eddy selected was Senator Ward, of Alexandria. Senator Ward was believed to be at heart a supporter of Collins, but as he came from the home city of Hon. Knute Nelson, United States Senator, he had kept out of the heated part of the contest by being for Eddy. This was believed to be shrewd politics on the part of Senator Nelson; because when a man of the prominence of Senator Nelson and the political power he has is represented from his own town by a politician having certain leanings, it is, rightfully or wrongfully assumed that that politician represents the sentiments of the Senator. No man in Alexandria can afford to lock horns with Senator Nelson in a political contest and longer remain in political life. I take it that Senator Ward still has further ambitions, and consequently he was very willing to be counted in the Eddy ranks and keep out of the fight between the two leading candidates. This committee in reality reminds one of the eight to seven Electoral Commission. Both the Dunn and Collins men recognized that while the committee had been made up on the surface with a spirit of fairness, it actually stood eight to seven in favor of Collins. The Collins men were accordingly jubilant, and the Dunn men grew a little more beligerent, talking about taking matters in their own hands if they were likely to be defeated by an eight to seven decision.

Everybody who knew anything about politics understood that the whole convention—the ticket and the future success of the Republican party—rested with the credentials committee. The campaign had been too long, too bitter and too exciting for either side to be willing to lose its grip if there was the slightest chance for a scrimmage, with a reasonable basis to stand upon.

Library of Congress

The credentials committee was called to meet immediately after the adjournment of the convention at the Ryan Hotel, and a recess was taken until later in the day. When the convention met in the afternoon the credentials committee, of course, was not ready to report. A committee on platform had also been appointed, but that too, was not ready to report, 333 and consequently an adjournment was taken until the next day. The credentials committee remained in session until 2:30 in the morning, but when the convention met again they were still unable to report. They had taken a large amount of testimony and heard the statements of both sides with much patience, but still had not reached an absolute conclusion.

The convention assembled at 9 o'clock on the morning of July 1st with a very impatient and uneasy feeling. It was generally understood that the credentials committee was not ready to report, and there was quite a strong sentiment prevalent in favor of going ahead without any report from the committee on credentials, which would have been another fire-brand and resulted in two conventions. It is probably due to Senator Clapp's finesse as a presiding officer that this turbulent feeling was smothered. He suggested some little matters of business which could be attended to, independent of the great central work of the convention, and called for a few speeches to briefly entertain the convention, at the same time announcing that the credentials committee would be ready to report at 2 p. m., and he thought a recess ought to be taken until that time. His remarks were of a very pacificatory character, and still no one proposed the recess which he suggested. For perhaps half an hour the convention was on the verge of an explosion, and it was a wonder to me, in view of other similar situations I have seen, that someone did not fire the bomb which would have resulted in disaster. After the few matters of business which the chairman suggested, and no one seeming willing to move a recess, Chairman Clapp was anxiously casting about for some method of murdering a little more time to keep the convention quiet, and, espying me on the platform, said he would like to call upon me for a short speech. With the usual apologetic announcement to him that "this is so sudden" I told him I was interested in saving the party and would help him out. He accordingly introduced

Library of Congress

me, and I occupied a few minutes, though the newspapers with their usual good judgment and discrimination did not attempt a report of what I said. Consequently, as the last and only opportunity of handing my remarks down to posterity, as well as an opportunity which
334 I cannot resist, of a “scoop,” I inscribe them here. They were substantially as follows:

A free and independent American citizen, acknowledging allegiance to no one but God, I feel entirely at home in standing before a great Republican convention. Born and reared upon the line of the “underground railway,” I early imbibed the principles of freedom which formed the corner-stone of the foundation of the Republican party. In 1872, following in the wake of eminent Republican leaders, I joined in the revolt against the re-election of that great military chieftan, General Grant, since which time I have been a sort of rudderless ship upon the political sea. A year or so ago, I concluded to return to my first love, though this has not been very generally known. During the past two days I have watched with much interest the contest now in progress in this convention, and I have said to my friends, “For God's sake, don't smash the grand old party now; I've just got back. Hold it together a little longer and give me a change.”

Up to this hour my advice seems to have been followed, and I accordingly congratulate myself that, though an eleventh hour repentant, I have succeeded in doing some penance by saving the party. I congratulate the party upon my return, and I congratulate myself much more than I do the party. I hope that in the remainder of your deliberations you will exercise wisdom, prudence and discretion. Keep cool—do not loose your heads—and all will be well in the end.

Now I know you are anxious to proceed with business, and I will not longer detain you. I thank you, gentlemen of the convention, most sincerely for the opportunity you have had to listen to me.

When I concluded, some good-natured delegate arose and made the motion which Senator Clapp so much desired for a recess until 2 p. m. While there were some negative

Library of Congress

votes, in fact a good many, the chair did not hesitate, after a little deliberation, to announce that the motion had carried. The convention had taken my advice.

At 2 p. m., when the convention re-assembled, there was still delay, the credentials committee still being in session, but the chair announced that they had concluded their taking of the evidence and were now engaged in voting upon their decisions, and in the course of an hour or less would be ready to make their final report. The convention was quiet and orderly, but was on the verge of another explosion as the delegates were tired of the delay, as well as excited over the probable 335 result of the nomination. They were anxious to conclude the convention with the second day and get home. Some of them were short of funds, and it was not uncommon to hear a delegate declare that if the convention did not proceed to business he would go home, convention or no convention. Senator Clapp managed to work in a few more pleasant speeches, J. Adam Bede and W. I. Nolan responding, and suggested one or two other motions which looked like business, though they really were of no consequence, quieting down the delegates by an announcement every few minutes of reports from the credentials committee across the street in the Ryan Hotel, stating how they were progressing. The matter was growing critical, however, and it is questionable whether, with all his suaveness, Senator Clapp could have kept the convention quiet much longer. Judge Jamison, chairman of the State Central Committee, was sent as a messenger to the credentials committee to ascertain what they were doing. This fact was announced, and in a short time Judge Jamison reported to the effect that the committee would be ready in half an hour. There was a good deal of talk at this time among the delegates of taking the bit in their teeth and going ahead with the convention, but better counsels prevailed and the afternoon dragged along, so that it was nearly 4 o'clock before the credentials committee were absolutely ready to report.

The report was exactly what everybody expected it would be—an 8 to 7 report in favor of the Collins forces. Senator Ward had proved the Judge Bradley of the committee, Judge Bradley having cast the decisive vote which made Hayes President of the United

Library of Congress

States. And then the real fight began. By a sort of common consent the contesting Dunn delegates from Ramsey County abandoned the fight, and the credentials committee had unanimously decided to admit the Collins delegates from Ramsey County.

Everybody recognized that this decision was really just. The Dunn delegates in Ramsey County had been too impetuous in leaving the county convention to have solid ground to stand upon. They should have stayed in the hall where 336 the Ramsey County convention was called to be held and fought it out on the floor. Instead of this, however, they withdrew early in the proceedings. The Collins men had control of the machinery of the Ramsey County convention, and before it had concluded would have given abundant reason for the withdrawal of the Dunn delegates. But the Dunn faction, knowing they were beaten, lost their heads in anger and withdrew from the Ramsey County convention before the Collins delegates had had an opportunity to show their arbitrary spirit, and their rule or ruin intentions. The consequence was that when it became whispered about through the convention that Ramsey County had been turned over to Collins, even the unseated, Dunn delegates did not murmur. "Served them right" was the popular verdict. But when it came to Hennepin County the situation was different.

The Dunn delegates in Hennepin County had remained in the county convention and fought it out, and by political rules had some basis to stand upon. The seven Dunn men on the credentials committee had accordingly decided to make their fight upon the Hennepin delegation of 113 members, and allow Collins to take the 67 delegates from Ramsey County. In order to seem real fair the Collins delegates on the credential committee allowed the Dunn members of the credentials committee to take Anoka, Benton, Clearwater, Red Lake, Sherburne and Traverse Counties, a total of 52; while the eight Collins men on the credentials committee demanded Beltrami, Cass, Hennepin and Ramsey, a total of 198, for Collins.

Under these circumstances the only thing for the credentials committee to do was to submit a majority and a minority report. No one cared much about the little counties, but

Library of Congress

the 113 delegates from Hennepin County was too big a prize to be lost by either side if success was to be hoped for. Senator Ward presented the majority report of the committee seating the Collins delegation from Hennepin County as well as the Collins delegation from Ramsey County. It was a sure enough 8 to 7 report, as everybody expected. W. B. Anderson, of Winona, presented the minority report which, like the majority, gave the 67 Ramsey men to Collins, 337 but took the 113 Hennepin County men for Dunn. And now the crucial period of the convention had been reached. The hot-heads among the Collins forces had wanted to allow Hennepin County to vote on this majority report in favor of seating themselves. To show how a little thing may carry great results, some delegate arose and asked Senator Clapp whether Hennepin County would be allowed to vote upon the respective reports of the credentials committee. Senator Clapp promptly replied, "Certainly NOT." There was a sort of emphasis and decision in his very tone of voice, especially on the "not" which carried weight with it, and really those two words probably had more to do with keeping the convention from splitting and nominating two candidates for Governor than all the other words uttered in that convention. If Clapp had arranged to be asked the question he could not have done the part better. The decision was so eminently just that the most impulsive man did not have the cheek to rise and enter a protest. The result was that it stood, and the Dunn men, of course, did not object because they believed they had the strength to carry the minority report independent of Hennepin County voting upon the question.

There was first an attempt made to act upon the respective reports of the committee on credentials by viva voce vote, but in a body of 1,175 men, with each voter nerved up to the point of yelling the loudest for the side he supported, it was impossible to determine the result in that way. Forty minutes were given to each side to present its case to the convention. As it was nearly 4 o'clock when the committee reported, it was nearly 6 when the speech-making was concluded. Roll-calls and lead pencils were in active demand to watch the vote on the motion of Mr. Anderson that the minority report be adopted instead of the majority report of the committee on credentials. That vote would determine the

Library of Congress

whole case. Everyone understood this, and the tension was something intense as the respective counties were called. When the secretaries had the tally sheets completed, it showed that the minority report unseating the Collins Hennepin 22 338 County delegation and seating the 113 Dunn men had been adopted by 622½ to 450½. A considerable time before this was officially announced the delegates who had kept tally knew the result, and the convention for a few minutes went mad, at least the Dunn portion of it. They knew the fight was over and that Dunn had won. The Collins men were sufficiently paralyzed to keep quiet, and the Dunn men had the shouting all to themselves, and only stopped when the secretaries had the footings made to hear the official announcement.

Grimshaw, who was a member of the Collins delegation from Hennepin County, was chairman of the committee on permanent organization. But after the adoption of that report he was no longer a member of the convention. There was a sadness in his voice when he arose and announced that, being no longer a member of the convention, he could not make the report from the committee on permanent organization, but delegated it to Senator Horton, of Ramsey, to present for the committee. He also made a graceful little speech which won him much sympathy, and caused him to be forgiven for his previous impetuosity. He announced that the Hennepin delegation bowed to the will of the majority and would now retire from the convention in favor of the other delegation. And so the 113 Collins delegates walked out into the street or gallery.

For three days and nights the Dunn delegation from Hennepin County had been parading the streets, carrying a large banner, "Hennepin County for Dunn," and headed by a brass band. Just before each session of the convention this procession, which looked more like strolling tatterdemalions than real delegates, formed with their band at the Merchants Hotel and marched up Jackson street past the Ryan Hotel and the Metropolitan Opera House, where the convention was to meet, on up Sixth street to the Windsor Hotel, which was inhabited by a large number of delegates, and then back to the Opera House to take seats in the gallery. This march was evidently for effect upon the country delegates. Accordingly, when they were finally seated, their leader still 339 carried the big banner and walked from

Library of Congress

the gallery to the floor of the convention with the placard announcing "Hennepin for Dunn." This time it really was, and the Dunn victors greeted that banner with as vigorous a yell as they were able to make in their somewhat exhausted condition. The applause was even more vociferous than when the vote was announced by which the minority report of the committee on credentials was substituted for the majority. After this the proceedings were tame and uninteresting. The convention began the speeches for candidates for supreme judges, but soon took a recess until evening in order to liquidate their joy. A good many were already thirsty, and those who were disappointed wanted to get hold of something to drown their sorrow. Consequently there was no objection to an adjournment this time.

At the evening session the continuation of the speeches nominating supreme court judges was the first order of the exercises. There were four judges to be nominated—three to take their seats the first of January, 1906, and one to take his seat the first of January, 1905. Judges Lovely, Brown and Lewis were the incumbents, and they were all put into the field for re-election for the term beginning January 1, 1906. Their only competitor was Charles B. Elliott, of Minneapolis, who was entered in the same class. After a dull and tedious roll call, it was whispered about the convention that all three of the old judges had been nominated. The fact was that Lovely had won on the first roll call by 11 votes, which was very close in a convention of nearly 1,200 men. Unfortunately for Lovely there were 113 Hennepin County men ready to trade for Elliott. The tellers were exasperatingly slow. They could scarcely have been more stupid. The veriest school-boy could have footed the columns of figures quicker than they did. The result was that it gave Hennepin County ample time to make its trades. Every little while a delegate would bob up and change a few votes from Lovely to Elliott. When the final vote was at last given out officially it stood: Lovely, 717; Brown, 1,099; Lewis, 974; Elliott, 739. Elliott had won by only 22 votes after all. Lovely's defeat can be set down as an accident rather than as intentional.

340

On the judgeship to take his seat in January, 1905, there were three candidates: Judge Douglas (formerly attorney general), D. B. Searle, of St. Cloud, and E. A. Jaggard, of

Library of Congress

St. Paul. There had been talk of Searle being a candidate earlier in the canvass, but as he came from St. Cloud his candidacy was held in the back-ground lest it damage Judge Collins, whose home was in the same city. The Collins men charged the talk of Searles up to the Dunn men. After the roll call and the long wait for the tellers, the official announcement was made as follows: Jaggard, 637; Searles, 351; Douglas, 277.

The Dunn men offered Judge Douglas their support if he would give them his home county, Clay, with its 13 votes. He declined. They became so anxious that they renewed the offer if he would give them one-half of the Clay County delegation. Such an offer would indicate that the Dunn forces did not feel quite as sure of their strength as they claimed. It is to Judge Douglas' credit that he declined to buy a judgeship by a trade, and he went down to defeat with his colors flying. He told me afterwards that it was the railroads which defeated him.

Searle had made a remarkable run for a five-minute candidate. Douglas attributed his defeat to his hostility to the "merger." He simply went down with the Van Sant machine, which was the natural and expected result of politics. Van Sant and the officers at the State House had all been ardent supporters of Judge Collins. Attorney General Donahower, prior to his appointment to fill General Douglas' place, was ranked as a Dunn man; but as soon as he went into the Van Sant official family he became a Collins supporter. It was the most natural thing in the world when the administration machine had been smashed to wipe it entirely off the earth. It was simply the personal misfortune of Douglas and Donahower that at that time they were part of the machine. When the convention met I would not have given a picayune for the chances of Ed. Young, of Appleton, securing the attorney-generalship, but the turn of the wheel that downed the administration machine was his good fortune and Donahower's 341 misfortune, with the result that the vote stood for attorney general: Donahower, 394; Young, 784.

Following the nomination of judges came the gubernatorial nomination which was the great prize which had made all the trouble for six months previously. When this climax

Library of Congress

was absolutely reached in the convention there was no interest in the matter whatever. Everybody knew after the credentials committee report had been adopted that it was a mere matter of form. The consequence was that when James A. Peterson, of Minneapolis, arose to nominate Robert C. Dunn, for Governor, which he did in a ringing speech, but little interest was taken; and before the roll could be called James A. Martin, of St. Cloud, who had been Judge Collins' manager through the heated campaign, moved to make the nomination by acclamation. Senator Reeves, of Glenwood, who was the special representative of Congressman Eddy, seconded the motion of Martin, and in about a minute the thing was over, and Mr. Dunn was nominated by acclamation, an event which he and his friends predicted many months before, but without imagining it would come just as it did. It was a close question whether it would come at all for a good while.

Concluding the ticket was a very perfunctory matter. Ray Jones, of Minneapolis, was nominated for Lieutenant Governor, and Peter E. Hanson, of Meeker County, for Secretary of State, without opposition. State Treasurer Block had a little fight on his hands, but scored nearly a thousand votes. His opponents were simply in training for the future, and wanted to have the prestige of being in the "also ran" class, and defeated, to use in some other convention. It probably pleased them, but delayed the convention a little.

The Railroad & Warehouse Commissioners, two of which were to be nominated, caused the only remaining contest, Ira B. Mills, of Clay County, and W. E. Young, of Blue Earth, being nominated. Mr. Mills was already a member of the commission, and it was given out in advance very decidedly that he was to be shelved. There are, however, but few men in the state as well versed in the manipulation of politics as Mr. Mills. The result, to the surprise of a great many people, 342 was that he was one of the two successful men, though there were seven candidates in the field.

Mr. Dunn was, of course, brought in to accept. There were no fears that he would decline, so that there was no very intense excitement when he was seen coming up the aisle to the platform. His speech was quite brief, but in very good taste and temper. The salient

Library of Congress

point, and the one that struck the most responsive chord among the delegates was that he "knew his friends, and would not forget them." Perhaps if he had not stated that he knew his friends every delegate in the convention would have claimed at that particular moment to be one of them. But he rather estopped eleventh hour conversions by those words.

Senator Clapp had been made permanent chairman at an early stage of the proceedings after the credentials committee reported, and took charge of the convention to the last, which was until nearly 2 o'clock in the morning. It is due him to say that he handled himself and the convention admirably and won hosts of friends in a very trying position. If he had been arbitrary and unfair, the convention would have been twins at an early stage of the proceedings, and Senator Clapp's chances would have suffered with those of the rest of the party, so that he was wise in his own interests.

After it was all over, there was, of course, the usual sore spots, but it is rare that anything formidable comes from after-convention soreness. I have been on the sore side of politics nearly all my life, and I give it as my calm judgment that "it don't pay." In a little while the only fellows who know there is any soreness are those who sit around and rub their sore spots just to feel them itch. It should be borne in mind that there are six thousand local office-holders in Minnesota, everyone of whom is a local politician and is working for his personal bread and butter. His success depends upon keeping up the machinery of the party. He can not afford to be sore, and he is not. He wants to be re-elected or grab a new hold on the official teat if he has not yet obtained a grip. He is bound by self interest to work for the party. So that I summarize my advice to those who are sore, not only in this but on any future similar occasion, thus:

343

1. Let the canker of defeat gnaw your heart strings in secret.
2. Do not wear your heart upon your sleeve for daws to peck at.

Library of Congress

3. Go to the gallows with a smile on your face. You will look just as sweet as an angel.

The November sequel can, perhaps, easily be prophesied; but as I am a historian at this time rather than a prophet, I will let that take care of itself.

It is not at all probable that when Judge Collins announced his candidacy in November, 1903, he had the slightest intention of resigning from the Supreme bench where he still had three years to serve at a salary of \$5,000 per year. He had twice before gone into State conventions as a gubernatorial candidate without resigning his judicial position, but this time his friends insisted on his resigning as a condition of their support. They felt that his retention of the judgeship would prove fatal, and did not care to attach themselves to a lost cause. He accordingly tendered his resignation during the winter to take effect March 31, 1904. He did his best, and his ambitions are doubtless more tranquil than if he had not had the experience. He can soliloquize, 'Tis better to have fought and lost, than never to have fought at all. The fun of the experience is a permanency, for him.

James A. Martin made a most admirable campaign manager for Judge Collins. The near approach of Judge Collins to success was largely due to Mr. Martin's management. He, too, was a sufferer, as he was holding a \$3,500 position on the Board of Control, which he resigned to go into the fight. He simply bet on the roulette wheel of politics, but picked the wrong color. The wheel still goes around.

Governor Van Sant was an interested spectator from one of the boxes during the session of the convention, and there are those who confidently assert that he entertained a lingering hope that in the hot fight in progress, he might again be called to lead the party by a popular uprising of the convention. While I have no doubt he would have responded favorably to such an uprising if it had come, I am also aware that there were personal and altogether creditable reasons which 344 prevented Governor Van Sant from being a formal aspirant for a third term, and still I believe there was the "lingering hope." With two

Library of Congress

such pledged and pronounced anti-merger candidates as Dunn and Collins, Van Sant was crowded off the earth, so to speak.

The sun has risen and set during every 24 hours since the convention, and may continue to do so for several moons.

That convention was only an atom of temporary dust on the fly wheel of a great and cold blooded world.

The delegates have to smell their own breath to know they were ever in St. Paul.

Sic transit .

345

OBSERVATION FORTY-SEVEN.

Resume of State Elections for 50 Years.

1857.

At the first election for governor there were cast 35,340 votes, of which H. H. Sibley (Dem.) received 17,790, and Alex. Ramsey (Rep.) 17,550, a Democratic majority of 240.

This was the first and only governor of Minnesota the Democrats elected until 1898, 41 years later, when John Lind (Dem.) was chosen.

1859.

Two years later there had been an increase in population, and 38,917 votes were cast. Ramsey was again in the field for governor and received 21,335 votes, while George L. Becker (Dem.) had 17,582, giving Ramsey a majority of 3,753.

1860.

Library of Congress

The first presidential election in this state was in 1860, and the total vote cast was 34,737. Nothing so marks the depression in business, which followed the panic of 1857, as the contract of the vote in the state election of 1859 and the presidential in 1860. It is proverbial that larger votes are cast presidential years than any other, but in this case 1860 showed 4,180 less than in 1859. The state was young, and had been growing rapidly prior to the financial panic, but it is evident by this vote that thousands sought other homes. Of the 1860 vote Abraham Lincoln (Rep.) received 22,069, Stephen A. Douglas (Dem.) 11,920, and J. C. Breckenridge (Southern Democrat) 748. Lincoln's plurality over Douglas was 10,149 and majority over both 9,401.

346

1861.

At the gubernatorial election this year only 26,722 votes were cast, the smallest number polled since Minnesota was a state. This indicates that the population continued to decrease for at least four years after the panic of 1857. Ramsey was again a candidate for governor, receiving 16,274 votes to 10,448 for E. O. Hamblin (Dem.). Ramsey's majority was 5,726.

1863.

The era of recuperation had evidently begun, and 32,467 votes were cast for governor, Stephen Miller (Rep.) who received 19,628, and H. T. Wells (Dem.) 12,739. Miller's majority 6,889.

1864.

The second presidential election in which Minnesota participated 42,422 votes were cast. Though this was nearly 8,000 votes in excess of 1860 the Republican majority was

Library of Congress

much smaller than in that year. The vote stood, Lincoln 25,055; McClellan (Dem.) 17,367. Lincoln's majority 7,688.

1865.

Only 31,160 votes were cast for governor in 1865, nearly 11,000 less than for president in 1864. W. R. Marshall (Rep.) received 17,318. H. M. Rice (Dem.) 13,842. Marshall's majority 3,476.

1867.

There was a marked progress in population between 1865 and 1867, 64,376 votes being cast the latter year. Marshall was again a candidate for governor, receiving 34,874 (which was more than the entire vote of the state in 1865), while C. E. Flandrau (Dem.) received 29,502. Marshall's majority 5,372.

1868.

In 1868, 71,818 votes were cast for president, General Grant, (Rep.) receiving 43,722, and Horatio Seymour (Dem.) 28,096. Grant's majority 15,626.

347

1869.

The Prohibitionists had their first gubernatorial candidate in 1869, and the Republicans had the smallest majority that year of any recorded during their victorious career. There was a marked falling off in the vote, only 54,513 being cast. Horace Austin (Rep.) received 27,348, George L. Otis (Dem.) 25,401, Daniel Cobb (Pro.) 1,764. Austin's plurality over Otis, 1,947, and a majority over both 183.

1871.

Library of Congress

A wonderful jump in two years is recorded by the vote of 1871, which was 78,172. Governor Austin was running for his second term, and received 46,950, Winthrop Young (Dem.) 30,376, Samuel Mayall (Pro.) 846. Austin over Young, 6,574; over both, 5,728.

1872.

The year 1872 was memorable for the Grant and Greeley presidential campaign. 90,919 votes were cast, Grant receiving 55,708, Horace Greeley (Ind. Dem.) 35,211. Grant's majority 20,497.

1873.

There was the usual falling off from the presidential year in 1873, only 77,022 votes being cast. C. K. Davis (Rep.) had 40,741, Ara Barton (Dem.) 35,245, S. Mayall, (Pro.) 1,036. Davis over Barton 5,496, over both 4,460.

1875.

The total vote for governor was 84,017, J. S. Pillsbury, Republican gubernatorial nominee, receiving 47,073, D. L. Buell (Dem.) 35,275, and R. F. Humiston (Pro.) 1,669. Pillsbury over Buell 11,798, over both 10,129.

1876.

The presidential year brought out 123,931 votes. R. B. Hayes (Rep.) receiving 72,955, S. J. Tilden (Dem.) 48,587, Peter Cooper (Greenback) 2,389. Hayes over Tilden 24,368, over both 21,979.

348

1877.

Library of Congress

There were no side issues this year, only Republicans and Democrats having candidates for governor in the field. The vote, as usual, fell much below the presidential year, only 96,218 being cast. Governor Pillsbury, for his second term, received 57,071, W. L. Banning (Dem.) 39,147. Pillsbury's majority 17,924.

1879.

In addition to the two regular parties, the Prohibitionists and Greenbackers had candidates for governor in the field in 1879. There were 106,500 votes cast, Pillsbury receiving for his third term 57,524, Edmund Rice (Dem.) 41,844, William Meighen (Greenback) 4,264, Satterlee (Pro.) 2,868. Pillsbury's plurality over Rice, 15,680, his majority over all 8,548.

1880.

The presidential contest this year brought out what was regarded as an enormous vote, the total being 150,484. James A. Garfield (Rep.) received 93,902, W. S. Hancock (Dem.) 53,315, J. B. Weaver (Greenback) 3,267. Garfield over Hancock 40,587, over both 37,320.

1881.

There was a new deal in 1881, General Hubbard being the Republican nominee for governor, after Pillsbury had served three terms. The total vote cast was 102,193, Hubbard receiving 65,025, and Gen. R. W. Johnson (Dem.) 37,168. Hubbard's majority 27,857.

1883.

In 1883 there were again only two candidates for governor. The total vote cast was 130,713, Hubbard receiving for re-election 72,462, and A. Bierman (Dem.) 58,251. Hubbard's majority 14,211. Governor Hubbard enjoys the distinction of being the only governor who held office five years. The odd year was produced by an amendment to the

Library of Congress

Constitution, adopted in 1883, which extended Hubbard's term one year. In the natural order of things the next gubernatorial election would have been in 1885, but some of the minor officers were then elected every other year, so that there was no year without a state election of some description. The Constitutional amendment accordingly extended the term of the governor and several other state officers one year, and the next state election, for governor was held in 1886. This also resulted in making state elections every presidential year, which had not been the case heretofore, and since then we have only had a state election every two years.

1884.

In 1884 there were cast for presidential candidates 190,017 votes. James G. Blaine (Rep.) received 111,685, Grover Cleveland (Dem.) 70,065, St. John (Pro.) 4,684, B. F. Butler (Greenback) 3,583. Blaine over Cleveland 41,620, over all 33,353.

1886.

The first state election under the amended Constitution, already noted, occurred in 1886, and the 200,000 mark was passed, 220,558 being the total vote. A. R. McGill (Rep.) received 107,064, A. A. Ames (Dem.) 104,464, James E. Child (Pro.) 9,030. McGill's plurality over Ames was 2,600, but he lacked 6,430 of a majority of all the votes cast.

1888.

For the first time in the history of the state, Minnesota voted for president and governor together, in 1888. For president 262,188 votes were cast, Benjamin Harrison (Rep.) receiving 142,492, Grover Cleveland (Dem.) 104,385, Fisk (Pro.) 15,311, Harrison over Cleveland 38,107, over both, 22,896. It is worthy of note that Cleveland lacked just 79 votes of the number cast for Ames, the Democratic candidate for governor two years previous.

Library of Congress

For governor, 261,632 votes were cast. W. R. Merriam (Rep.) had 134,355, Eugene M. Wilson (Dem.) 110,251, Hugh Harrison (Pro.) 17,026. Merriam over Wilson 24,084, over both 7,058. Merriam's majority was 14,023 less than President 350 Harrison, and Hugh Harrison, the Prohibition candidate, polled the highest vote that party has ever cast in the state.

1890.

A new factor was introduced into state politics in 1890, what was then called the Farmers' Alliance, but now Populist party, putting a ticket in the field for the first time. This ticket drew from both of the old parties, and nearly gave the state to the Democrats, but a little larger proportion of the Alliance men came from the Democratic ranks, and hence the uniform Republican success remained unbroken. The total vote cast was 240,892, of which Governor Merriam, who was a candidate for re-election, received 88,111; Thomas Wilson (Dem.) 85,844, S. M. Owen (Alliance) 58,513, James P. Pinkham (Pro.) 8,424. While the combined vote for the candidates other than Merriam was 152,781 against him, he was, nevertheless, elected by a plurality of 2,247 over Wilson.

1892.

In 1892, the People's or Populist party appeared for the first time in national politics. The total presidential vote was 267,238, Cleveland (Dem.) receiving 100,920, Harrison (Rep.) 122,823, J. B. Weaver (People's) 29,313, John Bidwell (Pro.) 14,182. Harrison's plurality over Cleveland 21,903.

There were four candidates for governor in 1892, and 255,922 votes were cast, almost 12,000 less than for president. Knute Nelson (Rep.) had 109,220, Daniel W. Lawler (Dem.) 94,600, Ignatius Donnelly (People's) 39,862, W. J. Dean (Pro.) 12,239. While the combined vote was 146,701 against Nelson, he still had 14,620 plurality over Lawler.

Library of Congress

1894.

The total vote cast for governor in 1894 was 296,333, the largest vote ever polled in the state up to that date. The People's party forged to the front with 34,352 more votes than the Democrats. Nelson received for re-election 147,944, George L. Becker (Dem.) 53,579, S. M. Owen (Populist) 87,931, Hilleboe (Pro) 6,879. Nelson over Becker 94,365, over Owen, 60,013, 351 plurality over Becker and Owen combined 6,434. Nelson only lacked 445 votes of obtaining a majority over all three of his competitors combined.

1896.

There were 337,329 votes cast, Clough receiving for governor 169,906, Lind 162,244, Dean (Pro.) 5,184, Ames (Ind.) 2,890, Hammond (Socialist) 1,125. Clough over Lind 3,652.

1898.

Total vote cast for governor 252,562 of which Eustis (Rep.) received 111,796, Lind (Dem.) 131,980, Higgins (Pro.) 5,269, Hammond (Socialist Labor) 1,685, Seng (Pop.) 1,802. Lind over Eustis 20,184, Lind over all 11,398.

1900.

Total vote cast for governor 314,181, of which Van Sant (Rep.) received 162,905, Lind (Dem.) 150,651, Haugan (Pro.) 5,430, Fairchild (Pop.) 763, Lucas (Socialist Dem.) 3,546, Kritz (Socialist Labor) 886. Van Sant over Lind 1,254.

1902.

Library of Congress

Total vote cast for governor 271,129, of which Van Sant (Rep.) received 155,849, Rosing (Dem.) 99,603, Meighen (Pop.) 4,821, Van Leuven (Labor) 2,570, Nash (Socialist) 2,521, Scanlan (Pro.) 5,765. Van Sant over Rosing 57,246.

1904.

What?

352

OBSERVATION FORTY-EIGHT.

Windom's Candidacy for the Presidency.

In the political history of the state "Windom Ten" has been written down as a burlesque incident. When the campaign for the Republican nomination for president in 1880 was in progress, Minnesota was an overwhelmingly enthusiastic Blaine state. Senator Conkling's darling ambition was to defeat Blaine, and he was shrewd enough to see that Minnesota could only be swerved from Blaine by springing a "favorite son." Mr. Windom was flattered by Conkling's suggestion, and the poison spread to his friends, with the result that Minnesota went to Chicago solidly instructed for Windom. At that time Minnesota only had 10 delegates to the national convention, and during the four day's balloting the reading clerk would announce in stentorian tones, "Windom, ten," and much of the time the announcement would provoke derisive laughter. Blaine's friends always felt that if Minnesota had been loyal, he would have been the nominee, and in their estimation "Windom, ten," was a badge of tricky politics. The delegation was undoubtedly sincere, but it seemed at the time like grasping for a will-o-the-wisp.

While Mr. Windom's candidacy was unquestionably sincere on his part, and on the part of many of his most active friends, it had its real origin, not from friendship for him or desire to see him president, but from a desire to help some one else. On the 20th day of May, 1880, the day after the Minnesota Republican state convention had instructed for Windom,

Library of Congress

I wrote and printed a criticism in the Globe, and after the lapse of nearly 25 years I see no reason to modify the views I then entertained. I accordingly quote it as pertinent in this review. I then said:

353

The fight in Minnesota is a double one. It was for Grant for president and against C. K. Davis for the United States senate. The Grant men were smart enough to see that it would be positively hopeless to carry the state for him direct. They did not need the 10 votes for Minnesota direct, but if the state could be, by any device, taken away from Blaine, it broke the backbone of the chief opponent to General Grant's success. Ex-Governor Davis was an open and avowed friend of Blaine, and was also understood as being a candidate for the United States senate. Hence his defeat as a delegate to Chicago broke the Blaine backbone and severely wounded the senatorial spinal column. We do not gainsay that many honestly supported Windom, who, at heart, were opposed to Grant and the third term, but these were the rank and file. The leaders know that the fight, as it stands, is between Grant and Blaine. They were cunning enough to see that where votes could not be secured direct for Grant, it was a two-thirds victory to keep them from going to Blaine.

It is interesting at this time to trace the inception and rise of the Windom boom. On January 19, 1880, the Pioneer Press took a consensus of presidential preferences in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In Minneapolis 79 opinions were thus classified: Grant 32, Blaine 15, E. B. Washburne 17, Sherman 10, Hayes 3, Garfield 2. In St. Paul 60 interviews were given showing, Grant 18, Blaine 13, the nominee 7, Garfield 6, Sherman 5, Windom 3, Ramsey, Hayes, Edmunds, and "any one to beat Grant," 2 each. Mr. Windom's candidacy was then scarcely thought of, and not a single Minneapolis man mentioned him. Wm. Bickel and the late Dr. J. H. Stewart of St. Paul, and a third party unknown, were the only ones to mention him in St. Paul. John Douglas, Mr. Windom's brother-in-law, was among those quoted, and he expressed a preference for Blaine. On the 26th of January, 1880, the Pioneer Press published interviews with 54 residents of Winona, Mr. Windom's home, and Mr. Windom's name was not recorded in the list of

Library of Congress

favorites, though W. H. Yale said that if Windom should be a candidate he would be his (Yale's) first choice. In February, 1880, Gen. J. H. Baker, then editing the Mankato Free Press, expressed his preference, but qualified it by adding:

If Mr. Windom enters the list, the delegates from this state will be named for him. 23

354

As late as March 28th, only about two months before the Chicago convention, the Pioneer Press published a conjectural table of the way the respective states would vote, and put Minnesota down for Blaine.

The Minnesota Republican state convention was held May 19th, and the real beginning of the Windom boom in earnest can be said to date from April 29th, when the following appeared in the Washington correspondence of the New York Sun:

Mr. Conkling says, seriously, that Windom is his second choice. The senator from New York will not admit that, in the nature of things, there can be a second choice, but if by some dispensation of providence Grant should not be nominated, Conkling will labor earnestly for Windom.

How great a matter a little fire kindleth.

On the 10th of May I published this in the Globe:

A week ago there was but little idea that Minnesota would go against Blaine at the Chicago convention. The situation, however, is changing rapidly, and by the 19th it would not be surprising to see a whooping Windom crowd in St. Paul.

On the same date the Pioneer Press had an article, which is amusing to read in the light of the facts. It was arguing as to the probable nominee (still ignoring Windom) and advising sending an uninstructed delegation to Chicago. It wiped Grant out in this manner:

Library of Congress

The result of the county conventions in Illinois, especially the decisive victory of the anti-third termers in Cook county on Saturday, which ensures a large majority against Grant in the state convention, has taken him absolutely out of the canvass. His name will not go before the convention.

There was a vigorous fight in Ramsey county between the Windom and the Blaine forces. The primaries were held five days and the county convention was held two days before the state gathering. C. K. Davis desired to be a delegate-at-large to Chicago and it was important he should have his own county. He was so pronounced for Blaine that he must necessarily antagonize Windom's friends, but Windom was not regarded as a very formidable candidate, and Davis carried the county handsomely.

The Pioneer Press in commenting on the primaries the next day said:

The question was no longer whether Blaine should be nominated, but whether Cush Davis should be sent as a delegate to the national convention. Cush it appears is one of the Blaine syndicate, and had been determined on as one of the Blaine delegates to Chicago. The Windom boom was therefore declared to be a personal war on Cush and as Blaine stock declined the air was filled with vociferous personal appeals for Cush.

When the county convention met on May 17th, Davis offered the most peculiar "Windom resolutions" which were ever prepared. They were adopted, because the county convention was composed of Davis' friends, but I imagine Senator Davis had more political sagacity than to think that a Windom state convention would send him as a delegate, after declaring his first choice to be for some one else. The resolutions are too amusing to omit. They were:

Resolved, That while James G. Blaine is our first choice for nomination at Chicago, we are in favor of the delegation from this state giving its support to William Windom, in case there is a reasonable prospect of his receiving the nomination for president.

Library of Congress

Resolved, That the late contest in the county of Ramsey, had in it no element of hostility to Mr. Windom; any supposition to that effect is an error and any statement to that effect, if persisted in, is a misrepresentation.

In the state convention Davis offered slightly modified resolutions in that he stated, what was true, that prior to Windom's candidacy the state was for Blaine, and while now for Windom, it would support Blaine if Windom could not secure the prize. But though he eloquently advocated giving the delegation some latitude, the Windom men argued that if they went to Chicago, announcing, in advance, a second choice, they might as well omit having a first choice. As a result Davis' resolutions were 356 not adopted and he was not selected as one of the illustrious "Windom ten."

As a sort of historical formula it may be of interest to see what the state convention of 1880 did after rejecting Davis' first and second choice resolutions. This was the 1880 platform:

Resolved, That while we do not detract from the high qualifications of the other distinguished candidates for the office of president, with friendship for all and enmity toward none, we hold it to be the duty of Minnesota Republicans first to be loyal to their own state, and as we have an eminent senator, whose qualifications are such as to command the wide and favorable attention of the whole country as an available candidate, we who know him best take pleasure in adding our testimony to his entire fitness for the high position. His ability, pureness of personal character, his unswerving fidelity to Republican principles through 20 years of honorable public service, and his trained and liberal statesmanship, have endeared him to the hearts of his constituents.

Resolved, Therefore, that it is with pride that the Republican party of Minnesota, in convention assembled, present the name of William Windom as candidate for president, who would harmonize all factions and sections of the country and insure Republican success in the contest of 1880, and the delegation of Chicago, selected by this convention,

Library of Congress

is hereby instructed to use all honorable efforts to secure his nomination as the first choice of the Republicans of Minnesota.

The St. Paul Dispatch, edited at that time by Capt. H. A. Castle, then as always a warm friend of Senator Davis, on the afternoon of May 19th, while the convention was still in session, very fairly diagnosed the situation in the following comment:

The fight is pretended to be made in the interests of Mr. Windom. The pretense is false and shallow, so far as four-fifths of the manipulators are concerned. There is practically no opposition to conceding any reasonable demand of Mr. Windom's friends in the convention. The only question is: Shall those intrusted with the advocacy of his claim at Chicago be men with Blaine antecedents or men of Grant antecedents?

It is probably very rare that friends rally to bring out a man for some high position or propose his promotion without some selfish motive. The first talk of Windom for president and the first talk of Senator Davis for the same position did not come from personal regard or desire to advance their fortunes, save 357 as it would advance some one else, but they are not subject to censure or charge of overweening ambition on that account. Mr. Windom appreciated his position and did not propose to be a stumbling block in the way of his party. He accordingly wrote a letter to the gentleman in especial charge of his political fortunes at Chicago, which has never been printed, but which it is due his memory, I should make public and I append it. It certainly shows that Mr. Windom was not a puppet in Conkling's hands to advance General Grant:

United States Senate Chamber, Washington, May 29, 1880.—It is possible that a contingency may occur when the vote of our delegation may decide the result as between General Grant and Mr. Blaine. In that event it is my earnest desire that they shall support Mr. Blaine, both because he is the choice of our state as against General Grant, and because I think his election would be more certain. Please urge this upon the delegation

Library of Congress

at the proper time, as a duty to the party as well as to our state. I do not consider such a contingency as at all probable, but wish you to be prepared for it in case it should arise.

Hastily yours, WM. WINDOM.

Years afterward I met a prominent Minnesota Republican who said to me that he called on Windom in Washington some time after the event, and Windom said to him: "Did you know I came pretty near receiving the nomination for president?" The visitor conceded that he did not understand how "Windom, ten," was very near the goal, and Mr. W. then explained. He said Postmaster General James of New York told him that the Grant forces had decided to go to him, and have the credit of nominating the president, even though it was not first choice. This was thought to be better than to allow the Blaine forces to win a semi-victory in a similar manner. Mr. James said that Mr. Conkling actually left his seat to go over and notify the Minnesota delegation that they were going for Windom, and urged them to do the rest, when some one halted him and advised delaying one more ballot. He accepted the advice. This was fatal. On that one ballot the stampede to Garfield began and then it was too late. If the "Grant 306" had been added to 358 "Windom, ten," it would have carried the stampede in the Windom instead of the Garfield direction.

I can testify from personal knowledge that the convention, wearied and torn by dissensions and a protracted siege, was like a box of tinder, only needing to be ignited to go off like a rocket. If this story is true, it has been well kept, for the Grant forces always prided themselves upon their prestige of "never surrender." "306" medals were struck off and presented to them as the stalwarts of stalwarts. Here comes an apparently well-authenticated story, showing that only an accident prevented their striking their colors in the heat of the fray. The tale also has an element of encouragement for "favorite sons," when the big candidates are determined to win separately or die together.

359

OBSERVATION FORTY-NINE.

General Reflections and Nuggets of Wisdom.

In reflecting upon the relative good and bad elements in politics which I have observed in Minnesota, I summarize them by saying that I believe Minnesota politics are no worse than those of other states and better than some.

I do not assume that this is a very high standard of morality, but it is something; a high standard would not be justified by the facts.

There is always a great deal of loose talk about the expenditure of money and corruption in politics. Much of this comes from the large mouths of men who like to appear to be important political factors and to assume that they can secure and handle large sums of money. After the frequent repetition of their stories they become nothing loth to assume that much of the money is used in debauching the body politic. This idle talk, and oftentimes simply vicious pipe-dreams, creates a wrong impression. It is really very rare that a man goes into politics with the deliberate intention of being corrupt and buying his way to position, or of selling his vote outright, though it must be admitted this sometimes happens. I believe the average politician prefers to be honest—if he can—because it is so much more comfortable. It is true there are “hold-up” artists in politics just as there are in the mountains of California and Montana, but they are only a class and not the mass.

I have seen pathetic and even tearful sympathy displayed for the villain by an audience in the play entitled “A Social Highwayman.” In politics my sympathy goes out, not to the political highwaymen, but to their victims. The corruption in politics 360 is generally charged up to the victims. This is wrong. No matter how wealthy men or corporations may be, they do not desire to part with their wealth. They are in the situation of Jeff Davis, president of the Confederacy, who, at a very critical period of the Civil War, expressed a desire to be “let alone.”

Library of Congress

The trusts, corporations, and men of large business enterprises desire to be "let alone," and it has become the custom to purchase immunity by great political contributions. The president of a great railroad in Minnesota, not now a resident of the state, told me that he contributed \$25,000 for the election of Hancock and \$25,000 for the election of Garfield, his competitor. It was Jay Gould who was first frank enough to say that the only safe way for large business interests was to contribute to both sides, and then whichever side won the interest had "a friend at court" always under obligation.

There are, of course, political highwaymen who take advantage of this situation and bleed the business interests, which produces the large talk of corruption in politics. It is the system itself which is wrong, and still if a man's property and business is in peril he is quite likely to allow himself to be blackmailed on the theory of securing protection.

I believe the average man intends to be honest, whether he is a politician or plain semi-respectable citizen. When I see the number of rascals who prosper, and prosper greatly, I admit that my faith sometimes seems almost to have come in contact with a live wire. But I prefer to believe that honor and decency hold the supremacy in this world.

I do not wish to go through life with the constant belief that every man is a rascal. I would rather be mistaken, not once, but many times, than to adhere to that belief as a rule. Every business, every profession, every calling, is afflicted with bad men; but it does not follow that all so engaged are bad. Politics is a business, and political parties are the promoters of the business. The more political parties can blindfold and hoodwink their followers, the better they thrive. I despise the man who blindly follows party leadership and party names without the intelligence or manliness to think and act for himself. It is just that class of men, who are really like cattle being sold in the 361 shambles, who make corruption in politics possible so common. If the happy day should ever arrive when every man is an independent voter, instead of a party slave; when the voter will take the right as God gives him to see the right, and the welfare of his country as his guiding star, corruption in politics

Library of Congress

would measurably cease to exist. So long as there are men eager to be corrupt, and men equally eager to be protected, no political millenium is likely.

The men most accused and censured for corruption in politics are the men least to blame and the most to be pitied. I am not sufficiently versed in theology to determine just when earth will be transformed into heaven, but pending that supposititious event the cultivation of the independent voter will do more to purify public affairs than anything else. My comments do not apply to any particular political party, because all are equally bad in this respect, and will so continue until human nature is regenerated.

We open our great conventions in a perfunctory way with prayer, and there are always clergymen sufficiently reckless of their future state to plead with God for any kind of a convention, regardless of the political shibboleth. Still any convention can prove to its own satisfaction that all of the others are not worth praying for.

I imagine, however, that some time will elapse before it will become the custom to close political conventions with the band playing the air—

“Nearer My God to Thee.”

Many men who have been and still are prominent in political life in Minnesota are not even mentioned in this book. This is not intended as ignoring or an affront but is because I have sought to confine my work to a record of war, and those not mentioned have had their lines cast in pleasant places, and their pathway has been one of peace. Of those who have fought and won, I can say as an encouragement to those wishing to emulate their example, “Beyond the Alpine summits of great pain lieth thy Italy.”

I have not written this book as a politician. In fact, if I had been a politician I would not have written it at all. The politician 362 is one who listens well and talks little. I think I am a fairly good listener, but when it comes to keeping still, it is different. I believe in having an opinion at all times and expressing that opinion freely. That precludes being a politician.

Library of Congress

I have always taken a deep interest in politics and always expect to. I remember well, as a six-year-old boy, of having my ears soundly boxed for refusing the offer of a flag to hurrah for Henry Clay, the Whig candidate for president, in 1844, against James K. Polk, the Democratic candidate. I was "agin" both, as usual, and when offered the flag hurrahed lustily instead for James G. Birney, the Liberty Party candidate for president, who, in that early day, with his associates was laying the foundation for a republic of free men, a condition which, I thank God, I have lived to see realized.

The boxing of my ears on that occasion was my entry into political life as an independent thinker.

What I have written has been written from the standpoint of an observer of the acts of politicians, and not as an actor myself. I trust the reader will note the distinction between being a politician and an observer. I do not mean by this to cast reflection on the politicians. They are a very useful set of beings, and very important to every community. The salvation of the country really rests upon the contests of the politicians and their exposures of each other. Without two strong political parties I doubt whether this government could have held together as long as it has. The work of a police force is far more effective by its restraint than by its arrests. The feeling of the transgressor is that if he does right the police will not interfere with him. The same feeling applies to the politician, perhaps in a lesser degree; but the politician will be less open and careless about his wrongdoing because he knows that his opponents are watching him. The time has not yet arrived, however, when an independent citizen and a successful politician are synonyms. But it will come, and I can wait. Later I may conclude to bob up serenely, and S. Y. L.

ADDENDA.

364

OBSERVATION FIFTY.

The Trials and Tribulations of Building Transcontinental Railroads—The Story of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern.

Few people riding across the continent from St. Paul to Puget Sound in the luxurious transcontinental trains of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific roads stop to realize all the vicissitudes which these great enterprises encountered in their inception and construction. While the subject is largely non-political, it is still a matter of historical interest to trace the rise and growth and progress of these great enterprises. The Northern Pacific was the pioneer in creating public sentiment in favor of a northern transcontinental line, though it has not been allowed by any means to occupy the field alone. Dr. S.B. Barlow of Granville, Mass., began writing articles to the papers on the subject in 1834. He estimated that a line could be built which would carry a passenger from New York City to the Columbia River in twelve and a half days, and that a round business trip could be made in a month. This seemed wild and chimerical at the time, though it has been much more than realized in later years.

While Barlow wrote, Asa Whitney of New York, in 1844, was the first to urge Congress to give a grant of lands for the Northern Pacific Railroad. He asked for 30 miles on each side of the track, and so far succeeded that in 1847 he secured a favorable report from the committee on public lands. It would be tedious to follow all the ins and outs of the legislation and attempted legislation in those early years.

Gov. Isaac N. Stephens of Washington Territory made an exploration of the northern route (which was then supposed to be impracticable on account of snow) in 1853. In 1857, the Territory 365 of Washington incorporated the Northern Pacific company, and Alexander Ramsey and James Shields of Minnesota were among the incorporators. In 1860, when a bill was pending in Congress giving a 60-million subsidy to the Central Pacific, and 36 million to the Southern Pacific, Senator Wilkinson of Minnesota tacked on a few millions, giving a 25-million subsidy to the Northern Pacific and six sections of land per mile in Minnesota, and ten sections per mile beyond our boundaries. His amendment also named

Library of Congress

C. D. Gilfillan of St. Paul, N.P. Banks of Massachusetts, and I. N. Stephens of Washington, to form a company. All of these preliminary matters, however, came to naught. The genius who might be said to have first developed order out of chaos, without profit to himself, was Josiah Perham, a native of Maine, but resident of Massachusetts. He began his Pacific railroad work in 1853, but was entirely wedded to the southern route, and only when that company was formed and he was discarded did he turn his attention to the Northern Pacific. His great scheme was to make a people's railroad across the continent; and, after failing in Massachusetts, he got, in 1860, from the State of Maine, a charter for his People's Pacific Railroad, anticipating that he could find 1,000,000 people who would take one share of \$100 par value and pay \$10 down upon subscribing, to make a start in working capital. Of course, the people didn't subscribe, but Perham stuck to his hobby, and when the original Northern Pacific land grant bill was signed by Abraham Lincoln, in July, 1864, it provided that people could subscribe for the stock, but no bonds could be issued unless Congress gave its consent. This provision was modified in 1869 by a joint resolution, and still further abrogated in 1870, since which time there have been no lack of Northern Pacific bonds, in fact a surplus.

It was in September, 1864, that the company was formally organized in Boston by the election of Joshua Perham as its first president, and Willard Seers vice president. It was only a little over a year before Perham, disheartened and discouraged, retired from the presidency, and in December, 1865, J. Gregory Smith of Vermont succeeded him. Perham died in 1868, and, like many pioneers in business, died poor.

366

Years of labor followed in the effort to secure means for prosecuting the work. Exploring and surveying parties were sent out, but it was not until the spring of 1870 that work was actually begun. Jay Cook & Co. of Philadelphia, who had made so great a success in floating the government bonds to meet the civil-war debt, were solicited to place the bonds of the Northern Pacific on the market, and proceeded to do so in the most lavish manner. The commission they charged the company was sufficiently large to warrant this lavish

Library of Congress

expenditure, but it made the net receipts to the company from the receipt of bonds very much less than they should have been, and piled up a day of reckoning which was sure to come.

Few of the present residents of Minnesota can realize the situation here in 1873, when the banking house of Jay Cook & Co. failed, and the Northern Pacific Railroad, which had been built from Northern Pacific Junction, near Duluth, to Bismarck, in turn collapsed. It was as near the end of the world as I expect to see. Prior to the smash the Northern Pacific had purchased the St. Paul & Pacific line, and was the controlling spirit in what afterwards became the St. Paul & Duluth road. But these properties were turned back to their former companies, and everything was in statu quo. I question whether any circumstances can ever again arise which will cast such a pall over the state as that failure did—a pall which was many years in lifting.

Mr. Smith retired from the presidency in October, 1872, but was succeeded by Gen. George W. Cass, who held the position until 1874. It seems surprising that while Jay Cook failed in 1873, the railroad, which was really bankrupted at that one fell swoop, did not go into the hands of a receiver until 1877, when Mr. Cass resigned the presidency to become receiver. The receivership was of short duration. A reorganization was effected which, as usual, largely wiped out the indebtedness and left the reorganized company with whatever had been constructed on their hands in fairly good shape. The way to reorganize a railroad company is to decline to pay your debts and start with a clean sheet, using what property you have to borrow money on. Charles B. Wright of Philadelphia had succeeded Mr. Cass in the presidency, and he retained that position until 1877, during which time he contributed very largely to pushing the road forward towards completion. Ill health compelled his retirement, and Frederick Billings of Vermont followed him, holding the presidency until June, 1881.

A new figure was now rising on the financial horizon of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the person of Henry Villard. An able newspaper man, a fascinating war and descriptive

Library of Congress

correspondent, he had attracted much attention in his profession, but until this time was unknown in the financial world. He was the inventor of the famous \$8,000,000 blind pool which began his meteoric career. The blind pool consisted of Villard asking the financial men of Wall street to place \$8,000,000 in his hands without any guaranty or explanation of what it was for. The world stood still for a few minutes when they did it. When Mr. Billings retired from the presidency Villard was not quite ready to assume the reins, and A. H. Barney acted as president from June until the middle of September, 1881, with Thomas F. Oakes especially representing the so-called Villard interest in the road. Mr. Villard then became president and remained until 1884.

It was in the summer of 1883 that the famous driving of the golden spike occurred, and perhaps the most lavish excursion this country has ever seen was brought from Europe and the East to witness the driving of the last spike which connected the Twin Cities by rail with Puget Sound. As a matter of actual fact the railroad had been completed two weeks before and construction and possibly other trains run over it. But, in order not to mar the excursion before the party arrived at the designated spot for driving the last spike, some of the rails were taken up, and the ceremony of relaying and completing the road duly performed in the presence of the distinguished party. While this was happening, Mr. Villard and his securities were being raided in New York and abroad, and long before the excursion was over he was a financially ruined man. The capitalists accompanying Mr. Villard rushed to the telegraph offices en route and wired New York to sell their holdings. They thought the road was utterly worthless. The whole affair was like making a gala day of a funeral. When Villard retired in 1884, Robert Harris succeeded him, and remained in the presidency until late in 1888. 368 It had taken Mr. Villard four years to recuperate his shattered fortunes.

No one supposed when Villard retired he would ever again be at the head of that or any other great enterprise, but in 1888 Thomas F. Oakes was made president as his representative, while he himself was chosen chairman of the board of directors, a position even above the president. But more disasters were in store. In September, 1893, another

Library of Congress

receivership came. When the receivership occurred Brayton Ives became president, and for a time he and Mr. Oakes were receivers, the latter remaining in a sense as a representative of Mr. Villard. With Mr. Oakes' retirement from the receivership, Mr. Villard's personality became eliminated. It is possible, if he had lived, he would have again showed his remarkable recuperative powers. But death is kind in many cases, and with the termination of that receivership Mr. Villard's mission in life seemed to have terminated, and he laid down the burden of life. Following this last receivership, E. W. Winter became president, and after a short time was succeeded by C. S. Mellen, who served for five years as president. Upon his resignation Howard Elliott, the present president, was chosen in the fall of 1903.

While on paper and in the newspapers the Northern Pacific was the first transcontinental railroad in the field, the first railroad really started to connect Minnesota with the Pacific Coast, though not the first to be completed, was the Minnesota & Pacific, which was incorporated by a territorial act, approved May 22, 1857. Henry M. Rice, delegate to Congress from Minnesota Territory, had secured the passage of an act from Congress in March, 1857, which granted to the Territory of Minnesota six sections of land to the mile for a railroad from Stillwater, by way of St. Paul and St. Anthony, to a point between the foot of Big Stone Lake and the mouth of the Sioux Wood river, with a branch from St. Anthony via St. Cloud and Crow Wing to the navigable waters of the Red River of the North. It was in view of this land grant, which was given to the territory and not to individuals, that the territorial legislature passed a bill turning it over to an association of our citizens. The incorporators named in that act were: F. R. Delano, William Willim 369 of Stillwater, Alexander Ramsey, Edmund Rice, R. R. Nelson, William L. Ames and Charles H. Oakes of St. Paul, Richard Chute and Henry T. Wells of St. Anthony, Daniel Bassett of Minneapolis, A. M. Fridley and Dwight Woodbury of Anoka, Franklin Steele of Fort Snelling and S.B. Lowry of St. Cloud. As the name indicated they hoped it would in reality be a Pacific Railway at some time, but I doubt whether any of them expected it would be in their day. Nevertheless some of those I have named are still living. The first officers chosen

Library of Congress

were as follows: President, Edmund Rice; vice president, R. R. Nelson; secretary, J. W. Taylor; treasurer, J. M. Stone.

While this company and its successors never built the line from St. Paul to Stillwater, which was required by the land grant act, it is notable that in the early days everything was planned as beginning at Stillwater, making that the terminus of the road and St. Paul a way station. The legislature passed an act in February, 1864, giving the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad, which had succeeded the Minnesota & Pacific, authority to issue preferred stock and make such grant as they might desire concerning their land grant. In accordance with this act an agreement was made in February, 1867, to give the Stillwater & St. Paul Railroad the lands for the mileage between St. Paul and Stillwater, and this was ratified by the legislature. This subsequently became the connecting link with the West Wisconsin Railroad from Hudson to St. Paul, and later was fully merged into the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha system. Consequently, while by the aid of subsequent legislation and the construction of 20 miles of road the land grant was complied with and all the lands legally earned, Stillwater is neither the terminus nor even a station on the Pacific Railroad.

The vicissitudes of this early railroad enterprise were numerous and decidedly discouraging. A contract was made with Selah Chamberlain, of Cleveland, Ohio, for building a railroad from Stillwater to St. Anthony via St. Paul at \$22,000 per mile, and from St. Anthony to Crow Wing at \$13,000 a mile. Work was begun in October, 1857, and a portion of the proposed line between Stillwater and St. Paul was graded, as well as the portion between St. Paul and St. Anthony. The contract called for the completion of the road to St. Anthony from St. Paul by October, 1858, and from Stillwater to St. Paul by September, 1859. After much contest the state had voted to loan its credit to the extent of \$5,000,000 for the purpose of aiding this and other railroad lines, the bonds being due to be issued, as the railroads were constructed. On a portion of Chamberlain's contract he was to receive \$20,000 per mile in state railroad bonds, and for his entire work very little cash was required. The financial crash of 1857 and 1858 sadly interfered with those arrangements, and the result was that Mr. Chamberlain was obliged to suspend operations

Library of Congress

after grading 62½ miles and supplying ties sufficient for a track between St. Paul and St. Anthony. In June, 1860, the state foreclosed and bid in the Minnesota & Pacific Railroad. Later the state relented, and in March, 1861, the legislature gave the railroad company back its property on condition that it would go ahead with the construction. Parties were contracted with to build from St. Paul to St. Anthony by the 1st of January, 1862. But when that period arrived only 1,400 feet of track had been laid, the courts having enjoined the company from proceeding, owing to their not having secured the right of way.

In March, 1862, there was another turn of the wheel. The Minnesota & Pacific was reorganized as the St. Paul & Pacific. It was substantially the same men who were interested, and Edmund Rice was chosen president, with William Crooks chief engineer. The default in completing the road to St. Anthony was overlooked, and the same contractors were given another chance, actually completing the 10 miles from St. Paul to St. Anthony, so that it was opened with a grand celebration in October, 1862. The first locomotive, named "William Crooks," had arrived the year before the completion of this short line. No other ten miles of railway in the state has been constructed with such effort, disappointment and numerous failures.

A new factor now came in in the persons of E. B. and William B. Litchfield, who took contracts for constructing the road, taking their pay in stock of the same. In 1864 there was another reorganization, and the First Division of the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad came into existence. Edmund Rice remained president of the St. Paul & Pacific, and George L. Becker was chosen 371 president of that portion known as the First Division of the St. Paul & Pacific.

Litchfield & Co. built across the state to the Red River at Breckenridge, reaching there in the fall of 1871. In the meantime the St. Paul & Pacific proper maintained an active existence; but in 1869 it began surveying, only to find that it was paralleling the Northern Pacific. It was difficult enough to build one railroad at that time, and consequently the St. Paul & Pacific turned itself over to the Northern Pacific, thinking that company the better

Library of Congress

able to construct the line. If no further financial difficulty had been encountered the face of the railroad map in the state might be considerably different, but the Jay Cook smash of 1873 compelled the Northern Pacific to abandon the St. Paul & Pacific, and soon after that company went into the hands of a receiver.

In the meantime the First Division of the St. Paul & Pacific was also in trouble, and, defaulting on its interest, the trustees of the mortgages took possession, and J. P. Farley of Dubuque, Iowa, who was the receiver of the St. Paul & Pacific, was also placed in charge of the First Division.

A bonded indebtedness of 25,000,000 had been incurred with a line of railroad constructed across the state far in advance of the population. The glamor of the land grant had induced capital to build where there could be no hope for possible return for many years, and, with the Northern Pacific crash and the kindred disasters which that produced, nothing short of a miracle could have floated the St. Paul & Pacific through the storm.

It has always been claimed that at the time of the most desperate emergency in civil, military or business affairs there is always a man produced to take the helm; and the railroad history of Minnesota demonstrates that this statement is correct. It was after all these calamities that Mr. James J. Hill, the man who has proved to be the master mind, overcoming all obstacles, appeared on the scene. He planned another reorganization, and, being already in partnership with Norman W. Kittson in a line of steamboats on the Red River, very naturally went to him with the scheme. It was in brief to form a syndicate and buy up the bonds of the St. Paul & Pacific which were largely held in Holland. 372 One of Mr. Kittson's most intimate friends was Donald A. Smith, then a resident of Winnipeg, now Lord Strathcona, and the special representative of Canada in England. To him Mr. Kittson in turn went, and through him George Stephen, president of the Bank of Montreal (now Lord Mount Stephen), became interested. A syndicate of great strength was thus formed. With such means as they had at their own disposal, and the backing of a great financial institution like the Bank of Montreal, it was not so very difficult to purchase those

Library of Congress

bonds. The Hollanders were discouraged, and with much reason, though there was an immense land grant as the road then stood, and the bonds were bought at a very low figure. It was probably all they were worth at the time, however.

Pending this reorganization the syndicate named had filled in several gaps in the system, and when final foreclosure came, in June, 1879, there was an indebtedness of \$33,000,000 outstanding, as well as \$6,000,000 of stock. When the syndicate made this foreclosure purchase, the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company was formed, with George Stephen as president, R. B. Angus of Montreal, vice president, Edward Sawyer, secretary, and James J. Hill, general manager. From this time on Mr. Hill has been the generating motive power which propelled the machinery of this great railroad. Others have come and others have gone, but Mr. Hill has remained the presiding and directing genius. Of those who furnished the original material for the last reorganization, Mr. Hill is the only one who has always been active in the details of the development.

The work which he has done is not only part of the history of Minnesota but of the entire Northwest. Few men would or could have stood up under the discouragements and attempts to defeat his enterprises, and especially the attempt to destroy him for having done so much to develop the country. The time will come when, instead of being held up to the public as an oppressor to be avoided, Mr. J. J. Hill will be honored as the man who accomplished more than any one man who has ever lived to make the Northwest what it is to-day and what it is to be for centuries to come. It is not likely to come during Mr. Hill's lifetime. The more is the pity. It is a discredit that so many 373 obstacles have been placed in his pathway. But in spite of all this he has resolutely kept on his course, and millions of people are now prosperous and happy as the result of the efforts of this single man. A shrewd and sagacious business man, the railroad giant of the world, his only real offense seemed to be that he has had some regard while passing through life for the personal interests of James J. Hill. But if you will find me a man who conducts large business enterprises as a matter of philanthropy I will endeavor to arrange for his

Library of Congress

translation at an early period to another and a better world—he is certainly too good for this one.

Mr. Hill, being desirous of making the road what it was originally designed, an absolute Pacific railroad, planned a practical consolidation of all interests. The Great Northern was accordingly incorporated under the state laws, with Mr. Hill as its president, and the Manitoba and all the various branch lines consolidated, so far as operation is concerned, by a 999-year lease. The Minnesota & Pacific was entitled under the act of 1857 to six sections of land per mile, and in 1865 this was increased by allowing its successor, the St. Paul & Pacific, ten sections. The Manitoba system which fell heir to this was then entitled to 3,847,376 acres. This, however, was entirely confined to Minnesota, and the extension of the Great Northern over the mountain ranges was, therefore, without subsidy of land or money or local aid. In 1893 the climax was reached by the completion of the Great Northern to the Pacific Coast.

In the face of all the financial distress which befell the Northern Pacific, with its enormous land grant, extending nearly its entire length, the world almost stands aghast at the immensity of the problem which was solved by Mr. Hill. When Mr. Hill passes from earth he will need no monument, the erection of no statues. He has erected them already in the most practical form possible by the completion of a transcontinental railroad, without public aid of any character beyond the confines of Minnesota. The life work of Mr. Hill casts in the shadow the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp in the Arabian Nights. He has taken the role of Aladdin in real life, lamp and all.

374

OBSERVATION FIFTY-ONE.

The Two Men Elected President Who Never Served.

Persons familiar with politics do not have to have very long memories to recall that on the eve of the presidential election in 1884 the Rev. Dr. Burchard made a speech at a Blaine

Library of Congress

reception in New York, wherein he styled the Democratic party as supporters of “Rum, Romanism and Rebellion.” The reverend attempt to be alliterative cost Mr. Blaine the presidency. In a letter Mr. Blaine wrote twelve days after the election he said:

“I feel quite serene over the result.” But his next sentence did not show an air of entire serenity. He added:

As the Lord sent upon us an ass in the shape of a preacher, and a rainstorm to lessen our vote in New York, I am disposed to feel resigned to the dispensation of defeat, which flowed directly from these agencies.

While Rev. Burchard helped in Blaine's defeat, and, from a political standpoint, is entitled to the patronymic bestowed, I desire on behalf of fair play for the Lord to assign still another reason for the result. I always felt that the New York law, which at that time not only permitted but required the burning of the ballots after the count, made Grover Cleveland president in 1884. Blaine lost New York by 1,407, and a change of a trifle more than 500 votes would have elected him. I claim, as a general proposition, there is never a hotly-contested election in a city of 400,000 population or upwards, when the party in power in the city does not cast a good many more than 500 illegal votes, or in other ways keep their opponents at a very considerably larger disadvantage than that number. This axiom, as I might almost term it, does not apply to any particular political party. The sound of men's voices and their faces vary, but the ways of the politician are much the same, whatever name he travels under. My axiom will apply to Democratic New York or Republican Philadelphia. The ballots were burned, and there could not be a recount. Nevertheless, in my judgment, Mr. Blaine was elected in 1884 as clearly as was Mr. Tilden in 1876—two presidents-elect who never took the presidential chair.

The dispassionate historian of a later generation will place Samuel J. Tilden and James G. Blaine in the very front rank of American statesmen, owing to their behavior when elected to the presidency. It needed great resolution and patriotism for Tilden in 1876 to

Library of Congress

countenance and urge, in the interests of peace, a commission which was foreordained to give the presidency to the defeated candidate. The popular impulse was ripe for a revolt, but Tilden put the crown aside, and the country was saved. In a sense Blaine was also a victim of 1876. If Tilden had been given the presidency in 1876, and Blaine on the first count had only needed to find 524 fraudulent votes against him in the great city and state of New York he would have been chosen in 1884. While the crisis of 1876 was perilous, that of 1884 was absolutely volcanic. For a few days the country was on the verge of a civil war, which would have been most awful in its results. The Democrats were wrought to the highest pitch by the recollection of the 8 to 7 commission of 1876, and if a change had been attempted in the vote of New York, giving the state to Blaine, there would have been an instantaneous riot in every town and city in the country. It would have been the worst of all struggles, a hand-to-hand contest, friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor. We would have been South Americanized in a twinkling. The daily newspapers in most of the cities ceased the issue of bulletins and extras to prevent the gathering of the turbulent. In St. Paul the third night after the election, the crowd in front of my office was feeling in an ugly mood over the rumors that New York was being counted for Blaine, and a visit of a cheering Republican crowd from a neighboring newspaper had not added to the sweetness of the occasion. Trouble was brewing, and arrangements were being made to attack the other newspaper 376 crowd. The authorities endeavored in vain to disperse the multitude which packed the street in a solid mass from sidewalk to sidewalk. By the advice of authorities and of friends, I flashed, in this emergency, a bulletin declaring in the most positive terms that a telegram just received from New York stated that the state was counted for Cleveland, that the Republicans had given it up, and that that was the last bulletin for the night. Very few were in the secret, and, while the Democrats went wild, the news soon spread to the Republican crowd further down the street and correspondingly disheartened them. They had formidably barricaded the street with trucks, wagons, boxes and anything which could be hastily secured, and were arming themselves with clubs and stones for the expected attack. The discouraging news enabled the mayor to persuade the Republicans to disperse, and a fraction of the happy Democrats swept down the street

Library of Congress

and went singing over the barricade which half an hour earlier would have been held with desperation and bloodshed.

It was two days later before the result was absolutely known, but by common consent no more bulletins were posted in St. Paul after that night. It was the same in Minneapolis and everywhere in the land. The crisis the country passed through in those few days was not realized in the excitement of the moment. Blaine's friends were debating contesting the vote, but he was willing to accept the result as due to "an ass in the shape of a preacher" and the weather, and resolutely declined to allow the contest to be made. This result, however, was not reached until some days after the election. The election was on Tuesday, the 4th of November, and on Friday, the 7th, W. H. Barnum, chairman of the Democratic national committee, issued a proclamation declaring that, while Cleveland was elected, the Republicans were trying to count New York for Blaine. He asked the Democrats to fire salutes in every city in the land at noon on the 8th to celebrate their victory and everywhere to meet in public assemblages on the same evening, both to rejoice and to protest against the attempt to give New York to Blaine.

Late on the night of the 8th, William Henry Smith, manager of the Associated Press, sent out from New York over his signature the following message:

377

Our footings show that Cleveland has a plurality of 1,400. There are 18 places to hear from officially, which may reduce this somewhat. If Garfield's majorities in those places are accepted the plurality for Cleveland will be 724, but it is doubtful if Blaine polls as large a vote in those precincts as Garfield, hence Cleveland's plurality may be accepted at about 1,000.

This telegram to the press of the country was sent after consultation with Blaine and other leaders, and was in reality an official Republican pronunciamento of defeat.

Time in its revenges had evened up 1876 for the Democrats, and in its retributions had prevented the Republicans from obtaining what, but for the '76 event, they might have secured in 1884.

It was better that both wrongs should have been borne than that our form of government, which is a model for the world, should have been destroyed.

The day will come (if it has not already) when time has softened asperities to such an extent that the American people will recognize that to the uncrowned patriots, Samuel J. Tilden and James G. Blaine, they are indebted for successfully demonstrating their capacity for self-government. Others have done nobly, grandly, for the country in the presidential chair, but no other men save these two ever had the opportunity in their own personality and by their personal decision to peacefully preserve and perpetuate a government of the people by the people.

378

OBSERVATION FIFTY-TWO.

The Grant-Conkling-Garfield National Convention, 1880.

Of the many national conventions I have witnessed, I place the Republican gathering of 1880 at Chicago as the most interesting and exciting. It was a veritable battle of the giants, having Conkling, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison, Hoar of Massachusetts, Fry and Hale of Maine, Butterworth and a host of notable men among the delegates. It was a war from the beginning to the close, with the Grant column against the field. Grant had just returned from the most triumphant tour of the world ever enjoyed by any American citizen. Every honor which the kings, queens and emperors of the old world could bestow had been lavishly heaped upon the ex-president and soldier-citizen. It almost seems surprising that his own fellow citizens did not catch the contagion of adulation wafted from foreign shores, and with loud acclaim call upon him once more to be the head of the nation. It was

Library of Congress

undoubtedly Conkling's expectation that a wild enthusiasm would sweep the country, and there was a shade of bitterness in this passage from his speech nominating Grant.

Standing in the highest eminence of human distinction and having filled all lands with his renown; modest, firm, simple and self-poised, he has seen not only the titled, but the poor and lowly in the uttermost ends of the earth rise and uncover before him. Villified and reviled; ruthlessly aspersed by numberless presses, not in other lands, but in his own, assaults upon him have strenthened and seasoned his hold on the public heart. The ammunition of calumny has all been exploded. The powder has all been burned once.

379

The convention assembled on the 2d of June, 1880, and, while Grant was in the lead, the ambitions of Blaine, Sherman and others and their friends were encountered at the outset. It is a noteworthy fact that in all the preliminary skirmishes "the field" defeated the Grant forces, and this was the forerunner of the final defeat. It was of vital importance for the Grant forces to secure the temporary chairmanship, as he would have great influence in the formation of the committees on rules and credentials. The committee on rules meant everything to the Grant forces. They desired to compel the convention to accept the vote of states as a unit where the states had so instructed. In New York such instructions had been given, while the individual preferences of the delegates stood 51 for Grant to 19 in opposition, 17 of the 19 being for Blaine, Mr. Conkling's most hated rival. The Blaine men were bitterly fighting the unit rule and demanded that each delegate should express his individual choice. In Illinois there was a sharp contest over delegates, owing to the action of the state convention. When the Illinois delegates met in state convention at Springfield, the delegates from each congressional district formed themselves into district conventions and selected district delegates, which they reported to the state convention. The state convention ignored this and appointed a committee of one from each district to select the district delegates. A portion of the delegates chosen by the improvised district conventions

Library of Congress

were for Blaine, while the other crowd were for Grant. Hence, upon the committee on rules and credentials rested the fate of Grant and Blaine.

Don Cameron of Pennsylvania, an ardent Grant man, was chairman of the national committee, and that body held session after session to agree upon a temporary chairman. Gen. John T. Averill was the Minnesota member of the national committee, and his indignation over Cameron's course knew no bounds. He would refuse to entertain any motion inimical to Grant, and for a time rode rough shod over the dissenting portion of the committee. The fight became so bitter that the Blaine men proposed to call the convention to order and depose Cameron. Rather than have a fight precipitated in the open convention, the Grant forces finally submitted to a compromise, and Senator 380 George F. Hoar of Massachusetts, was chosen as temporary chairman, with the understanding that the rules and contests would be fought out in the convention. This was the first of a continuous series of victories which "the field" secured over Grant.

The convention awaited the reports of the two committees named, and it was not until the third day that another issue was sprung. Conkling offered a resolution on that day pledging every delegate to support the nominee of the convention.

All of the convention, except three from West Virginia, voted aye, and in the excitement of the moment Conkling offered a resolution for their expulsion. For once it seemed as if the Grant forces would triumph, as the motion of Conkling's was greeted with loud acclaim. It seemed to be likely to carry almost unanimously until Garfield turned the tide and again "the field" were united against Grant, or his champion, Conkling. Rather than risk an open defeat, Conkling withdrew the motion to expel, on the ground that it might be unjust. No candidate ever had an abler or more gallant leader than Grant had in Conkling, and no man's personal following ever seemed stronger, but he was the target of the combined opposition, and went down as the result.

Library of Congress

It was late Friday night, June 4th, when the committee on credentials reported. The report excluded the Grant delegates from Cook county (Chicago), who had been endorsed by the state convention, and accepted the district delegates who were favorable to Blaine. This report produced a wild scene of excitement, and when a California delegate yelled "We are here to nominate Blaine," the enthusiasm seemed to be unbounded. For 30 minutes there was a continuous roar of applause, the spectators being largely for Blaine, owing to the work of the local committee in their admissions. It was during this period of applause that a woman on the platform became temporarily insane, and, tearing down a flag, wrapped it about herself, hysterically screaming for Blaine until friends kindly removed her. It was midnight when Emory A. Storrs took the platform to speak against the report. That speech was the greatest effort of his life, and concluded with a glowing eulogium of Grant and 381 a pledge of loyalty to the party, whatever the result. As a peroration for Storrs the Grant forces yelled for three-quarters of an hour, during which time Conkling sufficiently relaxed his dignity to grasp the standard of New York, and headed a procession of yelling enthusiasts in marching through the convention aisles. The chair made no attempt to secure order, but when physical exhaustion restored quiet, a vote was taken, and the eloquent Storrs, Long John Wentworth and other prominent Grant men were excluded. It was not a question of who was right or wrong, but "the field" against Grant, and the report was adopted by 384 to 356. It was in keeping with the previous experience of the Grant forces. The other contests were similarly decided.

On Saturday, June 5th, came the report of the committee on rules, and this was the anti-unit rule reported from the committee:

In the record of the votes by states the vote of each state, territory and the District of Columbia shall be announced by the chairman and, in case the votes of any state, territory or the District of Columbia shall be divided, the chairman shall announce the vote cast for any candidate, or for or against any proposition; but, if exception is taken by any delegate as to the correctness of such announcement by the chairman of his delegation,

Library of Congress

the president of the convention shall direct the roll of members of such delegation to be called, and the result recorded in accordance with the votes individually given.

This rule was adopted by substantially the same vote as in the case of the contested delegates. This rule gave Blaine 17 votes in New York, 23 in Pennsylvania and 10 in Illinois, a loss of 50 votes for Grant—which might have saved him the day.

The platform committee report which followed the rule was only noticeable for the “what-are-here-for” speech which made Flannigan of Texas famous. And that was not on the platform direct. Some delegate moved an additional plank, endorsing President Hayes for his enforcement of the civil service law, whereupon Flannigan fired this shot:

“Texas, sir, has had quite enough of the civil service. For the last four years, for the 1,400 officers appointed by the president of the United States in Texas, 140 represent the Republican party. We are not here for the purpose of providing offices for the Democracy. There is one plank in their platform that I 382 have ever admired and that is ‘to the victors belong the spoils.’ We have been ground underfoot by the present administration. We expected this convention would nominate a stalwart, one who, after we had won the race, as we will, will give to those who are entitled to position, office. What are we here for? I mean the members of the Republican party are entitled to offices, and if we are victorious we will have them. We came here for that purpose. I move to lay the amendment on the table.”

Of course, after that speech, the convention could do nothing but adopt the resolution. Flannigan may have expressed the sentiments of a good many people, but it is not always wise, in politics, to give yourself away so plumply.

That 1880 convention could very properly have hung up the sign on Saturday, June 5th, “This is our busy day.” The rules and the platform were both adopted, and then an evening session was held for the nominating speeches. Blaine was first nominated by James F. Joy of Michigan in a most bungling manner. He even made a mistake in giving the

Library of Congress

initials of his candidate. The contrast between Ingersoll in Cincinnati in 1876 and Joy in Chicago in 1880 was so great that the Blaine men were too mad to swear, and some of them actually shed tears of rage. Frye of Maine helped out with his seconding speech. Next came Conkling with his presentation of Grant in a speech which has never had its superior, if its equal, on any similar occasion. He took the platform and mounted one of the tables set apart for the reporters. His commanding form and pale face looked fairly majestic. Without uttering any of the conventional formalities, such as "Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the convention," as soon as the applause which his appearance inspired subsided, he said:

When asked what state he hails from, Our sole reply shall be: "He comes from Appomattox— And its famous apple tree."

His allusion to the third term was in these cutting words:

383

There is no third term in the case, and the pretense will die with the political dog days which gendered it. Nobody is really worried about a third term except those hopelessly longing for a first term and the dupes they have made.

Garfield followed Conkling in the presentation of Sherman, and, while his candidate did not evoke much enthusiasm, the speaker did. There was one passage in Garfield's speech that I would like to commend to the political contestants and convention. It was as follows:

Not here, in this brilliant circle, where 15,000 men and women are assembled, is the destiny of the Republican party to be decreed. Not here, where I see the enthusiastic faces of 756 delegates waiting to cast their votes into the urn and determine the choice of the republic, but by 4,000,000 Republican firesides, where the thoughtful voters, with wives and children about them, with the calm thoughts inspired by love of country and love of home; with the history of the past, the hopes of the future, and knowledge of the great men who have adorned and blessed our nation in days gone by, there God prepares the verdict

Library of Congress

that shall determine the wisdom of our work to-night. Not in Chicago, in the heats of June, but in the sober quiet that comes to them between now and November, in the silence of deliberate judgment, will this great question be settled.

Both Conkling's and Garfield's utterances were rapturously applauded. E. F. Drake of Minnesota presented Windom, Frederick Billings of Vermont named Edmunds, and J. B. Cassidy of Wisconsin nominated E. B. Washburne. Not until this was done, and the Sabbath was already ushered in, was the convention ready to adjourn.

Monday, June 7th, was devoted to balloting pure and simple. On the first ballot 755 votes were cast, making 378 necessary to a choice. Grant received 304, Blaine 284, Sherman 93, Edmunds 34, Washburne 30, Windom 10. Nineteen ballots were taken in quick succession, it being 4 p. m. before a recess was secured until evening, when nine more were had, making a record of 28 for the day. Grant's vote ran as high as 309 that day and as low as 302, but most of the time stood at 306. Blaine never gained but one vote, starting at 284 and getting 285, and running as low as 275. Sherman began at 93, but ranged from 88 to 97. It 384 took eight ballots on Tuesday, June 8th, to finish the work. Five ballots showed no material change save Wisconsin's vote for Garfield on the thirty-third ballot, and the Garfield boom was carried through in three ballots, the nomination occurring on the thirty-sixth ballot. That ballot stood Garfield 399, Grant 306, Blaine 42, Washburne 5, Sherman 3. "The field" had defeated Grant without securing any of the other prominent candidates. 30